

## SANGRE ARDIENTE

reina alejandra prado

*For Ana Mendieta*

Defiantly, I stare into the camera  
Boyfriend doesn't get this  
is an offering to my orisha,  
saving my sanity while I've been in this pueblo  
Arrived a teenager, now a woman  
Too many years away from home seems like an imprisonment

I can't stand how the rednecks stare  
Trying to figure out what I am  
Jodér!  
Anything not like them is Black or Injin

At Iowa, I perform Facial Cosmetic Variations  
Alter my skin                      challenge stereotypes  
Stocking over my head              peers interpret  
an impersonation of criminality      blonde wig  
a desire to be                      White like them

All the while I make notes  
Channel frustrations into my craft  
Improve my artistry  
Professors take me under their wing  
Me enamoran, alentan mi ego

Creen que soy fácil como las gringas  
Soy sirena, a femme fatale  
Seduces them with dulzura

Llego al río a renovar votos  
Unirme a la tierra  
Me ofrezco a Oshún  
Baño de sangre  
Baño de fe  
Plumas plasmadas cubren mi ser

Soy ave, vuelo lejos  
Baño de sangre  
Baño de fe  
Plumas plasmadas cubren mi ser  
Espíritu llevame lejos de aquí,  
A mi isla encantada

Shutter snaps