



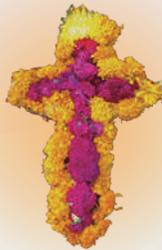
Cast away

Marooned upon the peninsula of a lime green pool noodle
 I float belly down in the ocean of a chlorinated basin
 The sun warm upon my back, as it dapples the bottom below
 Mesmerizing, iridescent flecks of the universe, caught in a bowl
 My shadow looms, a twin, yet a stranger, no face nor name
 If I hold my arms just right, the pool noodle becomes a set of wings
 Arms horizontal along the noodle, my shadow is crucified for my sins
 From angel to condemned, condemned to angel, with barely a ripple
 I slip fully into the water, the blue of the bottom, pulling me deeper
 into its womb, baptizing the air from my lungs, salvation at hand
 Until the last vestiges of consciousness, rattling for one more breath
 hurtles me upward, breaking the surface like a wounded sea beast
 Beaching myself upon the unbearable whiteness of the pool steps
 I sit, gasping for the air that will not come for the barrier of my sobbing
 Standing shakily, wrapped in the shroud of a blue and white beach towel
 I go inside, leaving a dripping trail of my sorrow, that will dry to the eye,
 An indelible secret message that is borne in heart, blood, brain and soul
 I am a mother with no child

—Randi Romo

La Muerte trajo manzanas
 a todos en el salón
 pero estaban envenenadas y
 todos se fueron al panteón

—Ángeles Decara



Ya va a ser Día de muertos
 DecaraPongámosles un altar
 Decaraporque si no van a venir
 Decaray los pies nos van a agarrar

—Ángeles Decara



Dicen que la Muerte anda
 Decarabuscando a quien enamorar
 Decarano se confíen mis amigos
 Decaraes para poderse los llevar

—Ángeles Decara

PLANTING SEASON

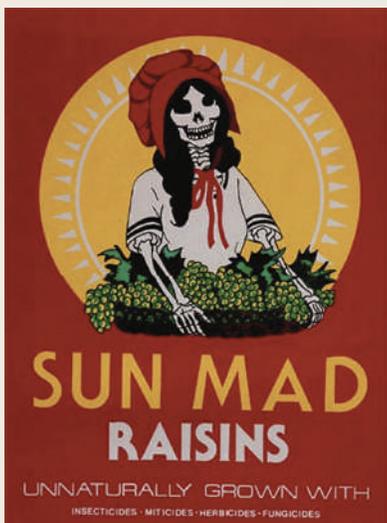
Grapefruits
 I hate them
 that was the size of the tumors
 that took my boy and my man
 funny thing they weren't blood
 but in death they were the same

Strawberries
 I hate them too
 those were the fields were they worked
 gas so deadly had to give it an odor
 laid in wait for them trapped under tarps
 getting the ground ready for the berries

They. Pulled. Up. The. Tarps.
 After the funerals I start to hear
 that this gas is so bad it's been banned
 except for the strawberries and
 except for some third world countries
 with other brown skinned people who are
 growing and picking fruits and vegetables
 to fill American grocery stores bins
 while grapefruit crops slowly blossom
 inside the tiny farms of their loved one's brains

Para mi comadre, Amelia

—Randi Romo



Artwork: Ester Hernández