If I were to turn myself into a poem

I'd give myself a pair of legs
so that I could travel to
Santiago, Chile,
the place of Neruda's death
and backpack to Borges' Buenos Aires.

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
I'd bring with me,
in my transformation,
all of the heartache,

the way my mother's gentle body
laid atop a pull-out couch
next to dad's hospital bed, nightly,
or the way my father never climbed back
into his leather-worked saddles.

I'd bring with me
everything I still have not allowed
my heart to write about.

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
I'd be an erotic poem,
slithering around the neck, the fingertips,
and into the optic nerve of the reader.
They would shut their door
to safely consume me (as a poem).

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
my format would consist of hilltops and flatlands
and it'd appeal to all five senses.
In reading the poem,
you'd pick up notes of sin and sacred sage.

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
I would flow like the Snake River of the Pacific Northwest.
I'd move sly and easy.
The reader would close their eyes
and put their hands on the waist of the poem,
dance and wrestle and even tongue kiss the poem.

If I were to transform myself into a poem,
I would unlearn the language of
all white, male poets
taught to me in grade school.

Instead, I would be
a Mother Earth poem,
a sacred soil poem
a floricanto poem.

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
the poem better be no saint.
That poem'd be a chain smoker.
play dominoes in back alleys,
the poem'd have a thick accent like Tio Chuy
and a gut from pork chicharrón dishes.

If I were to turn myself into a poem,
I'd be a melting pot of all poems,
21st century poems,
poems that I've read and reread
and involuntarily released a gasp,

poems that I didn't want to end,
that I wanted to live inside of,
poems that I've read and shouted to the page,
"Oh you clever, clever bastard!",
and the poems of all of the poets we have lost

and in my body of a poem
they resurrect and reincarnate
as poets are immortal,
clinking glasses of champagne,
amongst libraries and bookshelves.

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Briana Muñoz is a poet, author, literary event coordinator, and Indigenous Mexika danzante from Southern California. She is the author of Loose Lips published by Prickly Pear Publishing (2019) and of Everything is Returned to the Soil published by FlowerSong Press (2021). She has performed poetry in places like UNEAC (The National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba), CECUT (The Tijuana Cultural Center), El Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego and beyond.