

Submission to Hilum Earth (September 2026)

<https://archive.hilum.earth>

Your tongue is a wet archive

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Slicing into

sugarcane

Slicing into

fruit

Slicing into

skin

With each incision, liquid oozing. Hardness in the middle: pit, bone, root primordia. Stories gelled to somatic nerves. It starts with fingerprints pressed to paper. Contracts laced with a twisted language, alien to local mouths. Brown bodies lured away from the motherland, voyaged towards faraway colonies. The duplicitous promise of a halcyon existence. A fate of calamitous labour, inflicted on bodies that look like yours. Hunched spines curl like dark rainbows against the backdrop of sugarcane fields and a bulbous sun. Honey-toned rays that warm your subjugators but scorches you across bloodshot years. Bittersweet prize for the enterprise. Liquid oozing, this time with sweat. Trickling from the crown of your head down to the crown of a landscape that is not yours. An interloper breathing artificial freedom. Stifled, you bank enough oxygen, enough spit, to shelter in your mouth a spawn of untold stories of loss, labour and lament. You scan the medulla in your body for archival gaps, so you know where to hide them, to pass them on. You learn to bury your trauma inside the bellies of future women.

Blade

sharpens

Breath

sharpens

Pain

sharpens

Sweet whiffs of mangoes and bananas crack the air. Selling fruits of the empire, cupping their supple skins with your sandpaper hands. Liquid oozing, this time with fructose. Trading plantations for street corners, sugar in the blood still. From indenture to indebted: lapsed contracts, yet still bound to stranger land. Unable to return home to the fangs of abandonment. The astringent pang of familial shame. Within the realm of white devils, a

broken compass points you home. For now, you tie ropes around your prayers. You manifest them into songs that will be passed down to your daughters. Prayers become cushions to soften their inherited fears.

Daughters
dissent

Daughters
descend

Daughters
disobey

Your tongue is a wet archive. Research is a type of mourning, is a type of healing. You orient yourself through the yellowed pages of books or the clues of postcards from lives prior. Exhume the cameo ghosts of colonial reports and hand-written letters. Disobey the narrative, inject the ancestress, decentralise the bloodlines. Spark the dormant names of brown voices relegated into the peripheries of history dirtied. Motherland is an obsolete shape, a locative amnesia. But you long to pin it. You enter 'home' into Google: 23,410,000,000 results appear within 0.63 seconds. You understand the heterotopic grounding of 'home' as being nowhere and anywhere, yesteryear and now. You also know that time itself is a home. But what is home to Mother India, who lost her children and their children's children for one hundred and fifty years? What is home if it is not the make-shift sugarspin territories of South Africa, Fiji and Réunion? Or Mauritius, Jamaica and Trinidad? Or Tobago, St. Kitts and Belize? Or Guyana, Suriname and Guadalupe? Perhaps home is merely a pendulum. Liquid oozing, this time ink mixed with blood. Bladed into your skin are the names of the women who came before you. Tattoos as talismans, a matrilineal ladder of survival. Dimensions of trauma and terror, trials and triumph. Incisions become scars, wounds become vessels, loss becomes healing.