

# The Most Mine Fragments\*

by Cristina Rivera Garza  
translated by Jen Hofer



4

[Now is the time to speak]

The most mine is prostrate inside her body.  
Beneath the vault of her cranium  
in the magnificent flower, gelatinous and rosaceous,  
of her brain  
with the exact symmetry of its left side  
and its right side  
at the root of the solitary stem, perfect and vertical  
where the veins tangle together and the tips  
of the system of nerves explode  
my mother is a petal inside the box of her body.  
The giver of life

the above all other things giver of this life  
fell inside herself.

Now is the time to speak.

There are the days, the many days and years past,  
in the beginning, when I didn't love you.  
The days when growing into a woman was a senseless  
and malignant judgment.  
The days when your strength as a woman only increased  
my weakness as a woman.  
The days and the many years when your world  
of knickknacks and smiles and precise times  
could offer me nothing to drive away  
the boredom of growing into a woman.

Then followed the many years and the ever so many days  
beneath the face of damage.

Because in order to bend to your world without angles,  
to your world of tides and spume  
to the world in which the ultimate and lifelong  
sentence was to grow into a woman

I had to find the tiny mechanism  
of the splinter in the palm of your hand  
the exact fracture in your Achilles heel  
and all the other heels of all your feet  
salt fist that makes your eyes blink  
from blazing.

Within the days when the damage was a pinpoint of light  
that could arouse the innocent to sleeplessness  
are the hours, the infinite hours  
of the strategic promiscuity of bodies  
are the nights when this war between you and me  
forced open the sexes of men  
and of women  
intertwined on beds of alcohol  
and amphetamines  
on the vast and acrid surface of arms  
that open only to close.  
There are the dawns that chained  
each of my extremities  
and each of yours.



The months of flight toward the Pacific and speed  
and the unpeopled esplanade of cocaine  
where hurry went flying with wings of lime  
among reality's grey monuments.  
There are the many seconds shaded  
by the bruises poetry makes.

And when the damage finished manufacturing  
my solitude of a woman my own  
my armor of a woman only my own  
I returned home to meet you.  
I had come from the treadmill, from days and more days  
without bathing or food  
escaping the wheel of fortune and the wheel  
of misfortune.

Then began other days, many days  
and more years and more  
in which I loved you as if I'd never known you  
before.

With fury  
with the discretion fear and shyness provoke  
I hurled the animal of my love against your round table  
set for eight  
against your curtainless windows and the incessant  
heat left on in your surroundings  
against your strength as a woman above all other things  
that are implacable and dissimilar.

There are the days and the many years when that animal  
discovered calm within your hands.

And my solitude as a woman and my armor as a woman  
could be weak  
and could escape in their defenselessness  
from their solitude and their armor  
to be blood of your blood  
bread of your bread  
body of your body within which you're inside  
as much mine as yours and more mine than yours  
in these many days, some months  
we've spent prostrate before the flower, gelatinous  
and rosaceous  
the nuclear flower  
the imperfect flower of our brain.



8

[The man who was the devil of desire]

The man you dreamed up for me arrived with the wrong  
skin, which was red  
arrived giving off the indistinguishable smell  
of the sulphur of his land beneath this land  
arrived with his goat's hooves and his blind  
man's eyes.

The man I feared from before he existed  
was your desire  
and he was my nightmare.  
He was going to open my knees and yank from my sex  
the son you wanted.

He was going to tighten my bridle and tame my  
anxieties with the discipline of love  
with the bitter obedience of love.

The man you desired for me  
was more powerful than I was.

He was going to romp in my bed and drink my blood  
night after night and during the day.  
He was going to endow me with the paleness and the  
weakness and the prudence  
of what is sweet and is dead.

He was going to unfold me like a map and plant  
the flags of his conquest on my breasts  
on my navel, inside my sex  
and on all my bones.  
He was going to take me to his house and build me  
a world like yours.  
But the man who was the devil of desire  
who you wanted for me  
here inside my sex  
mastering me with pleasure and shutting me up  
with the damp tongue of his kisses  
had to measure his strength against mine.  
He had to give me his blood night after night  
and during the day.  
He had to feel the pole of my flags  
on his eyes, his arms, his sex.  
He had to recognize himself pale and weak and prudent  
like something that is loved and sweet and is dead.  
He had to live in the house I built.  
And just like me before he existed in me  
he feared me and he cursed me  
and he cursed love, the ferocious discipline of love  
the injustice and inequality of all love.

Then

without knowing  
without even noticing it  
she arrived, the woman you never dreamed up for me.



\* FRAGMENTS TAKEN FROM CRISTINA RIVERA GARZA'S BOOK OF POETRY, *LA MÁS MÍA* (THE MOST MINE) (MEXICO CITY: FONDO EDITORIAL TIERRA ADENTRO/CONACULTA, 1998).