

Invocation*

by Efraín Bartolomé

Speak for me, tongue of my forebears
Keep me from lying
Keep me from ever beguiling
about the coursing of my blood
about the vagaries of my heart

Don't let me fail you
Don't let me lie
Don't let me fall
Don't leave me
Don't.

In you I put my trust
In your wisdom burnished by time
like the nuggets of gold neath the patient waters of limpid rivers

Let me question before I believe:
Let me light up words by which to walk in the night

Translated by Asa Zatz

Keep me from talking of what I have not seen
of what I have not glimpsed with the eyes of my soul
of what I have not lived
of what I have not touched
of what I have not bitten into.

Don't allow me to make music foreign to my voice or my fingers
music not traveled in the air before reaching my ear
music not played on the blind harp of my heart

Don't let me buzz in the void
like the bees at the window pane of night

Don't let me be silent when I sense danger
or when I strike gold

Never a verse let me insist
that has not shucked the
the dark clam of my heart

Speak to me tongue of my forebears
Mother and wife



Drawings by Héctor Ponce de León

* Taken from the book *Partes un verso a la mitad y sangra* (Mexico City: La Flauta de Pan, 1997).