

To live in the borderlands is to know ghosts,

means

you start hearing voices in inner ears and outside voices in outside streets in mid-context.

despues de eso, eres solo.

When learning to conjugate in rote codes not vena cava pumping birthrights angreblood codes

and , those words

when I'm bringing them back to life in flashcards i can hear them whisper parece que you've

been gone a long time, mija grown a little bit older tus labios han hecho cambiados that your

tongue muscle don't recognize maybe you've been twice conquered.

parece que you've been hiding palabras under your tongue again

until they dissolve.

To live in the borderlands means

you're constantly having a stroke in one language or another-

I reach to say "i see it between us"

this tongue action entre teeth instead producing verlo.

to live in the borderlands means

sometimes they see it in you and invite you in que quieres comer?

sometimes they don't, and they don't believe you and you are hungry.

To live in the borderlands means

you remember what it was like to ask for love in another language

but now, in a stale cavity of malformado "r"s, you only know how to want.

This tongue that thrashes for misshapen words to sound like rrosas is my borderland

I have been pouncing and painting and acrobat flipping in machinic English.

But this idioma, this lengua, gurgles half-thoughts,

still waits somewhere in an acidic stomach pit

but each time it gets called up to read

this tongue slashing of texture,

this brain betrayal dam and body malfunction

does not compute

quiero un entendimiento

does not compute.

TONGUE MEMOIR

CRYSTAL SALAS

Crystal Salas is a sentimental little bird with many south places to fly for winter. She collects this sentimentality in poetry and thinks it a comforting way of becoming a functional adult. She can be found at perfectly cool parties forcing guests to contribute to drunken exquisite corpse poems, posting Frank O'Hara fortune cookie lines in the dark of night in small coastal surf-towns (ninja style with like-minded ninja friends), and consulting cats about meter. She guesses she is really about 60 years old inside. She recently graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Creative Writing, would like a job, and knows you think that is funny. When she is not flying solo, she is performing with the Razor Babes Art Collective. She just completed her first chapbook entitled *The Body Memoir* and she sewed it together herself.

