

*Mia Leonin*

## FATIMA – HAND OF FIRE

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Chen, one hundred and fifty six years ago, our city would be called Santiago and you Miguelito. The plaza is made like this: tax collector to the North, church on the East corner, merchants to the South, and me in the center –Fatima – hand of fire. Fatima shrouded in red.

Miguelito, passing through *la calle de los ríos*, the hem of your pants dragging along the ground, shouting that you have only been touched by the axe, the pick, the skin of a goat. All because of your bulbous nose and inability to talk in circles.

You will not pass by the candle maker's shop one more morning. You will not leave school, your shoe will not land on one more stone, without knowing what a mouth is for. Why should you be deprived one more mass without knowing what the knee thinks of when it kneels, what color the heart turns with a woman's face pressed into it?

I do not choose who to serve. You chose me turning right instead of going around the corner, searching for a path home that wouldn't traverse your spiteful schoolmates. You had the money sewn into your shirt. The money you had saved to buy a calf.

Now you are taller. Now your pockmarked face looks kissed by raindrops. Everyone in town sees it. The boys are picking up sticks. The girls are twisting in their dresses: *No, not the ugly one -- it cannot be him I want.*

Miguel, the body is accordion. It can be played or it can rest between the hands. I am the only solitary woman other women don't despise; the only stone the men don't spit on when they are angry with their lot on life. Someone else will teach you to love – skills you will procure at your own pace. You will not pass through here again.