

ABSTRACT

INSIDES MY MOTHER SWALLOWED: POEMS

When a person moves from one landscape to another in immigration, she must negotiate the physical loss of culture through a new culture of memory. As the speaker in this text asks what “insides” her mother has swallowed, she uses her mother as a guide through the internal—shaping the elusive feminine history of language, food, and sickness into her own experience.

In this construction of individual and familial identity, this is a collection as much about consumption as it is about loss. At the edge of what we eat is what we cannot or do not eat. But from those physical and metaphorical hungers form the complexity of seeking and finding. These are poems about want and reclamation—of how the speaker immigrates into and emigrates away from her mother, and how they both come to enter the sensual and spiritual world.

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