

saba looks for her dreams in a google search bar

saba says:

i had a nightmare
i was trying to dream/imagine
but could only do it on google
but everything I typed
wasn't good enough so I woke up

i am looking for my dreams
in a google search bar
in a job description
hoping that someone knows me
better than I know myself
hoping that someone can tame
twenty-seven aimless years
into words

i tell her:

keep the search bar empty
bare your feet and walk so that your soles
remember where you've been

there is nothing to know about the self
except:

that a step taken will make everything new

leave your hair untamed
like the twenty-seven aimless years
that have guided you to where you are

revel in the way those years
have colored your body
tattoos that others will wonder the why of

surrender only after a fight
don't pull away before you lean in
leaning in opens a whole world

maria eugenia lets the poet know there are things she needs

when she moves from city to city
she only brings the things she needs

the divan she sat on as a child
so she can lay back and let memory
be a comfort

the dresser bought in a town where a child
was born but may never return to

a small river rock passed down by an aunt
who knows the weight of things
and hopes this lighter thing
will make what we are forced to carry
less of a burden

a candle burned by a grandmother
that melts not from the heat of a fire wielding wick
but from that of an apartment in another city
another country another time
that is always too hot

rugs that don't match 'cause they remind her
not everything should fit neatly
into a space sometimes you just make room
for the things you love

and finally serenity
brought to her by
a bedroom in white
white bedspreads
white pillows
white walls
so sleep is as empty of nightmares
as these are of color

The 6-Year-Old Photographs the Generations Before Her

When you recruit a 6-year-old
to take a picture
of two women,
one whose hair has grayed,
the other who has yet to understand
how age affects the body,
both naked

she waits for their eyes
to tell the story she wants to hear,
pays no attention
to the way age wrinkles the eyes
or causes breasts to sag.
Does not compare
the nakedness of youth
to the paleness of its future self?

Waits until the way the young woman
looks at her elder
says, "I have so much
to learn from you
so much to ask."

Waits until the elder looks past the one
who will come to know her as ancestor,
as if she sees the space where she will stand
to watch, as they move through life
when she is gone.

things saba says you should know about tripping on acid

there are some things about tripping
on acid that you should keep in mind

time is an unnecessary construct

the friend who ain't tripping will record the moment

the corner is a world

a bath in a whirlpool tub
will have you watching yourself
from the toilet seat

your breasts will not detach from your body
but if they do there are those who will chase them down
your friends will return them to you
but strangers will keep them for further examination

how anger builds

there is nothing that makes me angrier
than shoes that grow to fit too tight
after a walk that went too long

than mold on bread that is needed for a sandwich
made when you are late for a meeting
and won't have time to buy lunch

than a quarter that falls in the gap between the seat and console
when all you have is enough to pay the toll you just drove up to
on the way to find out your mother is dead

than a tire going flat on a highway
under a sign announcing "you can pick up trump signs here"
at 3 in the morning where there is no signal

you are a whole meal

a menu item
asked for again and again
the way the spices sit on the tongue
creating a creature of habit
a simple dish served
complexity of flavors
devoured, no need for dessert
or to-go boxes
just a reservation
made for tomorrow
when the tongue will ask
to savor, what memory
reminds the body,
satisfied its hunger.

SAMI MIRANDA

Samuel “Sami” Miranda grew up in the South Bronx and resides in Washington, DC. He is a visual artist, poet, and teacher who uses his craft to highlight the value of everyday people and places. His work is heavily influenced by Puerto Rican culture and family history, as well as his interactions with his students, people he encounters in his travels, and DC locals. Much of his work is figurative and explores how the body and face illustrate the successes, hardships, and beliefs that people carry with them. He is the author of *Protection from Erasure*, published by Jaded Ibis Press, *Departure*, a chapbook published by Central Square Press, and *We Is*, published by Zozobra Publishing. He is currently working on collaborative projects with musicians and visual artists about the deep connections they can make through their artwork. Samuel’s artwork has been exhibited internationally in Puerto Rico and Madrid, as well as New York and Washington, DC. Most recently, Samuel’s artwork has been included in the Smithsonian’s new Molina Family Latino Gallery inaugural exhibition *¡Presente!* His artwork has been included in University and private collections.