

Poems by Lorena Aviña*
Illustrations by Erika Albarrán**

Technique Turns Hunger Into Time¹

WRITING FROM OUTSIDE MYSELF

I bear witness to what I see, where I exist
here lies the irreparable and
[
the days
sweat
two armed men
stretch of desert
tragedy
]
a cry for help
[my feet will dangle from
four hooks]
I'm writing from outside myself
but can't contain me.

WHEN THEY SPEAK OF MUCUS

of pigs lathered in waste, whales frozen still,
ticks swollen to the point of self-harm,
they speak of you.

They evoke your name when panicked
by a number on the scale.
They evoke your grotesque back when hungry.

"I could be anything but her," they say.

Reflexive gagging
points at you.

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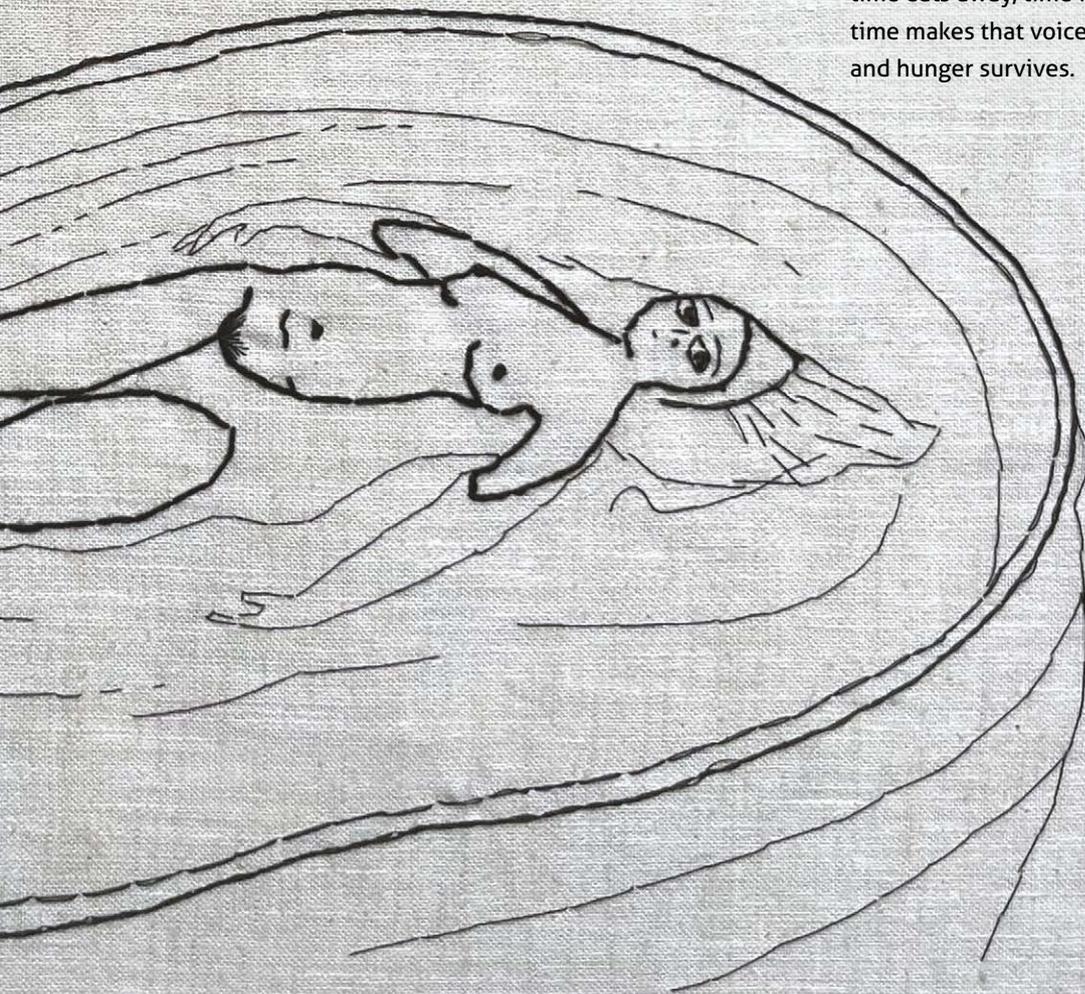
TO HEAR THE VOICE OF HUNGER, like listening to
a Buddhist monk, to feel the figure, the stinking illness
brimming in the eyes,

the years of evolution it took your belly
to learn to ask for more.

**

That demanding voice survives, used to
the solitude of falling shards
that designate sympathy in your mouth,
half surviving in liquid tatters
aimed to delay the gorging collapse.

Technique turns hunger into time.
Time waits, time is patient,
time eats away, time is surefire
time makes that voice heard, but words are only words
and hunger survives.

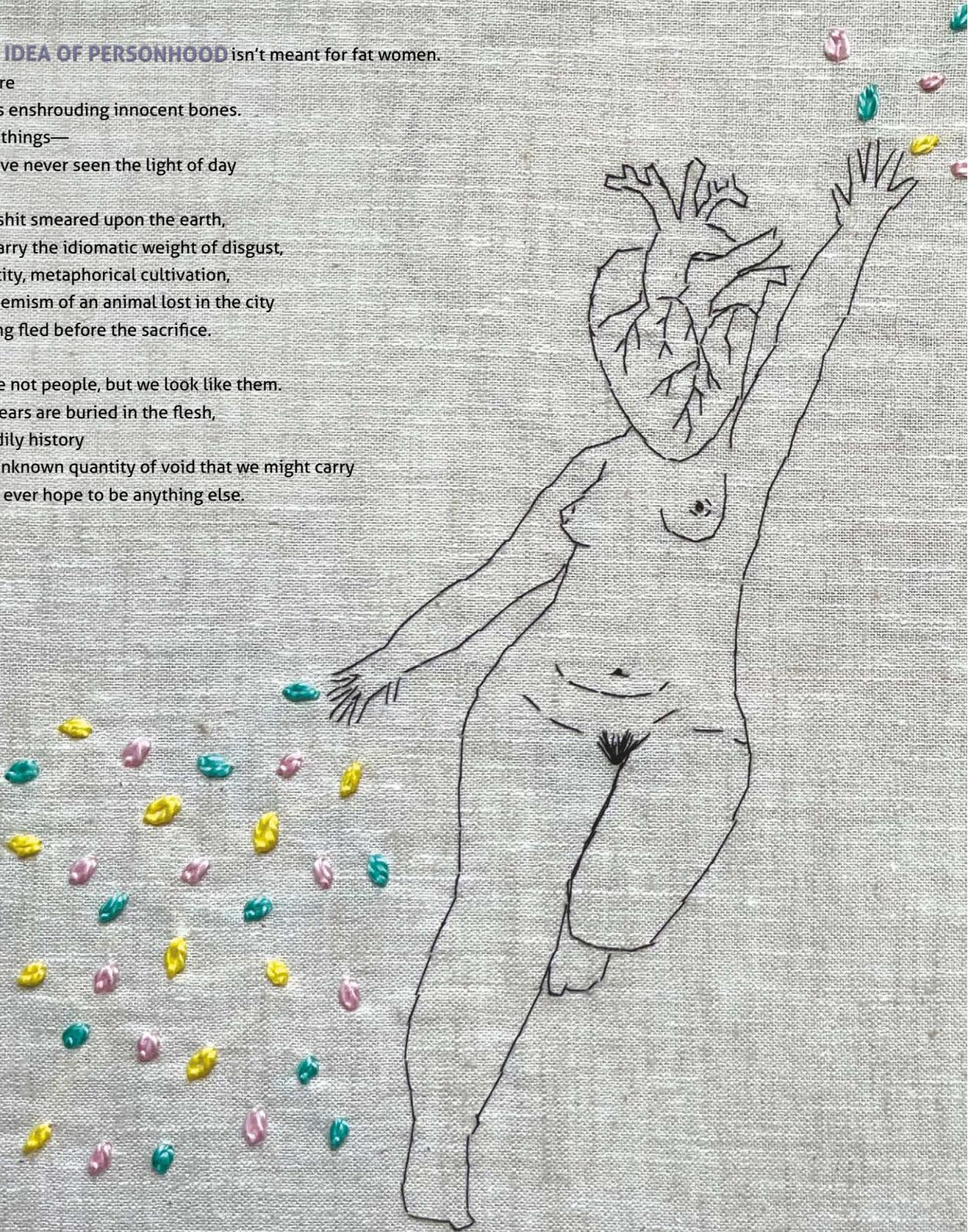


THE IDEA OF PERSONHOOD isn't meant for fat women.

We are
lipids enshrouding innocent bones.
Poor things—
they've never seen the light of day

Like shit smeared upon the earth,
we carry the idiomatic weight of disgust,
identity, metaphorical cultivation,
euphemism of an animal lost in the city
having fled before the sacrifice.

We're not people, but we look like them.
Our tears are buried in the flesh,
a bodily history
the unknown quantity of void that we might carry
if we ever hope to be anything else.





GIRLS ARE TOLD that ghosts are blue,
and the afternoon fountain is the food we've polished off.
We're told that cars can drive us far from home,
against our will,
that love should last forever.

Young women are told that our hair shouldn't be too long, not that long,
and that our goal should be to be somebody,
as if we weren't already somebody when we sing out loud and dance
in a flower-trimmed room.

But grown-up women,
who've reached that age between wrinkles and knee pain,
aren't told much at all

thus we can brush each other's hair
while we toss anything we couldn't get rid of earlier,
being so full of other people.
We show our faces and see,
finally,
who stands behind that absent voice.

We've come all the way here
because one of us urged that we resist the void,
one of us turned our tears into a sea, where we discovered we were mermaids,
like little girls who press their legs together to make fins.

Grown women, I insist, aren't told much at all,
but the quiet is no longer absence
and morphs into what we wish.

We, the grown-ups, save each other every day, pronouncing
You
as we point straight to our chest. **NMM**