

La matria

I followed my mother to her land for the first time

ven conmigo, she said

but then she became a voice from the volcano that I can see
if I tiptoe to the top of my *tía Carmen's* house in Quito
while her dogs bark around me and her sun never really runs away

and then she became the women that sell things on buses, everywhere, on streets, in markets

my family is so large they envelop me

and I struggle amidst them

they know things I don't, can't, won't know

– of course I cannot –

we grew up speaking the same language within different histories
sometimes
they speak it
and **it** holds pain from the past

yo sé que mi madre sólo quiere protegerme.

I followed my mother to her land for the first time.

ven conmigo, they said

at twelve years old I was off the longest flight straight
into the shortest greeting of my young life
people that had never touched me pulled me
into the warmest hugs and cried
tears owned by memories I was part of without my knowing:

I followed my mother to her land *por la primera vez*

¿ y cómo amaneciste ?

¿ y qué no me han dicho ?