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Eréndira

Julián Sánchez-Melchor
Gettysburg College

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Eréndira

Author Bio

Julián Sánchez-Melchor is a Religious Studies major at Gettysburg College, class of 2024, focusing his study on Christianity, Indigenous Acknowledgment, and Writing. In his work, he writes to capture the joys and struggles of his life as a queer Mexican-American, of indigenous descent. Julián has incredible pride in being a person of color and in his heritage. His art also reflects how his life has been shaped by Schizoaffective Disorder, a disability containing the symptoms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Eréndira

JULIÁN SÁNCHEZ-MELCHOR

In the heart of Michoacán,¹
they tell stories,
tales of a Siren.
The classic story
of a woman who feeds
off the souls of men.
However, there is no
mystery.
We know who this
lady of the lakes
truly is.
For the Sun and the Moon,
the very gods of the land,
granted her
eternity.

See the white dots of
the night sky be mirrored
across her visage,
for she doesn't just inhabit
the water, she is the
water.
Her falling hands drag
a mist over the
earth.
It is time to hide.
It is time to prey.
Here comes a boy,
a blossom of her people.
Mijito,² go no closer.
Haven't you been warned?

¹ Michoacán - Mexican Southern State connected to the Pacific Ocean

² Mijito - term of endearment meaning "my little child"

Eréndira drowns
bad men.
Even in the dark,
She can see.
His skin is tan,
but his eyes are green,
like the devils that
only knew slaughter.
However, tonight,
the boy is safe.
He is not yet
but tomorrow, Eréndira
may be enraged,
as the boy becomes
just another man.

Is she just a legend?
Nothing more than a
fairytale to stop
children from wandering
around alone?
No, it is more.
Though details get added,
even half a millennia later.
Eréndira lived, a woman
of the Purépecha,
a princess even.
Who do they say
she was?
The heiress who killed
herself in the absence
of her foreign love.
Or do you believe she
was a warrior princess,
the pride of the land?
Yes, picture her like this,
a beautiful tactician.
Una morena que
arrastra los blancos.³

³ “Una morena que arrastra los blancos” translates to “A brown girl who fights the white men”

No matter the account,
the narrative ends
in tragedy.
She was captured
by men who thought
they owned her,
thought they owned
all the brown folk
residing among
the “New” World,
and unconceivable
torture awaited her.
The “true” history
likely ends here.
But the people,
the brown folk
say otherwise.

They claim she was
hidden away,
given an ultimatum,
to submit, to renounce
her identity,
and marry the Spanish
general who was
infatuated with her.
They left her
with her thoughts,
only a few days
to willingly say yes
or be taken by force.
Her isolation
was guarded,
men stationed all across
the mountain, ensuring
she had no escape.
And so, she wept,
and prayed, and
pleaded for

freedom.

The celestial bodies
that govern the
atmospheres took
pity.

They empowered
her cry, and a
flowing ecosystem of
rushing water
spawned from her
grief.

And the Gods morphed
her body, so she may
live forever within
the water.

Maybe, the lake's
origins are
merely mythical,
but her tears,
those were real.

How can she stop crying?
When the war has yet to end,
when her people have been
torn apart, split in two.
When our women are
still constantly stolen?
Her tears will never
cease, as we
are still treated like
our ancestors because
we never stopped
being them.