



What and That

By Angela Trudell Vasquez

What woman picked the corn
split the husk and molded the seed
that fed the people and opened the world?

What being climbed down the tree
made the savannah a refuge?

Who caught the strike
that lit the bush that started the spark
that became the flame that lit the hearth
and traveled village to village
hallowed horn of smoldering smoke
that started the fire that cooked the kill
that fed the self to grow so big?

What worker birthed the child cut the cord
swaddled it, and kept on going down her
row?

What mother walked thousands of miles
with two hands held in those smaller than
her own?

What father carried his child over mountain
tops
swam through rivers crossed deserts and
lakes with one arm?

What prisoner pierced the lock
walked out into the sunshine?

What grandparent let her daughter sleep
while the child rose, bathed its skin
in rose water and lavender sang songs
of one and twos until it cooed back
ohhhhs and ahhhhs blowing bubbles?

What woman picked the corn, split the husk
and spilled the seed that fed the people
and opened our world?

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