Roots
by Alex Cahuas

The dilution of blood
Anger that is so misguided, misinformed, mistaken
I am here waiting.
Waiting for answers from voices whose bodies were deemed as cancers
Waiting for answers to our self-made disaster
How did we become so violent?
Why didn’t we learn how to treat our bodies with kindness?
Why did we grow up to not stay too long in the sun, comb your hair you look ‘dumb’
Make sure you marry lighter than you; your kids need to be lighter than you.
Think of their future; don’t you want a better life for your kids?
Think of your future, it’ll be easy to grow up and be rich.
You’re lighter skinned thank God, you’re beautiful you’ll go far
Biological warfare to weed out my Indigenous and African roots lost in my Grandmothers.
Voice smothered, their languages and stories not seen as enough, a detriment to them and their family’s well-being.
Speak Spanish; you sound like a heathen.
Stop breathing, is what they said to our history and cultures, silenced by colonizer- destructor.
Changing body, by perverting the mind with no respect for the soul.
I don’t even know my real last name, even that they stole.
Control. I am no accident.
A consequence of infestation of foreign domination who organized devastation through manipulation.
Degradation through your association, conforming to your obsession with pigmentation, as a desperate attempt at liberation.
The scars under my skin, remind me to resist.
To persist, commit and yes, uplift.
Be a part of the community I know and to stand in solidarity with the community I wish I could know.
To not let them hit lows, reminding people through prose that I spit at shows, where I am letting you know...
You have the right to feel beautiful, you have the right to be natural.
Unfathomable. I know.
Where shade doesn’t define you, que no vas a joder la raza, ama a lo quien amas y pasa lo que pasa.
No deja que te maltratan, que tu esperanza nunca es comprada.
The roots that hold you, are yours to keep
The truth will free you, but it is yours to seek.
Self-Deprecation

An art, a state of mind, an industry
My mind downloading your messages obliviously
Vigorously, manipulating me,
All of a sudden I look in the mirror differently
Literally hating what I have been given.
Being told, don’t worry. I can be edited with robotic precision
I am not enough is what you are telling me, my bad, that is what you are selling me.
Being told what is in the mirror is some disgusting creature, bursting into tears, asking why my
pores can’t get any clearer.
We have been taught to fear.
We fear our own beauty.
The unstoppable blinding light of your glowing smile,
The wild untamable jungle of hair that breathes through its curls or lays you to bed with its
soothing waves.
Your uncategorized, unmarketable, non-conforming, in your face, on your face, beauty
Not coming to a store near you, not coming in a size 0 or a size 2,
A beauty that lives through you.
Your heart, your soul, your beauty, YOUR beauty, that is out of control.
A beauty that knows it’s true
A beauty that comes in all colours: black, brown or blue
A beauty with self-confidence injections, leadership implants, washboard humility and brand-
name creativity.
A beauty that is yours and no one else’s
A beauty that can’t be tamed
And for that reason our beauty should never be ashamed.