

# **Praise the Tortilla, Praise the Menudo, Praise the Chorizo**

I praise the tortilla in honor of El Panzón,  
who hit me in school every day and made me see  
how the bruises on my arms looked like  
the brown clouds on my mother's tortillas.

I praise the tortilla because I know  
they can fly into our hands like  
eager flesh of the one we love,  
those soft yearnings we delight in biting  
as we tear the tortilla and wipe the plate clean.

I praise the menudo as visionary food that it is,  
the tripas y posole tight flashes of color  
we see as the red caldo smears across our notebooks  
like a vision we have not had in years,  
our lives going down like the empty bowl  
of menudo exploding in our stomachs  
with the chili piquin of our poetic dreams.

I praise the chorizo and smear it  
across my face and hands,

the dayglow brown of it painting me  
with the desire to find out  
what happened to la familia,  
why the chorizo sizzled in the pan  
and covered the house with a smell  
of childhood we will never have again,  
the chorizo burrito hot in our hands,  
as we ran out to play and show the vatos  
it's time to cut the chorizo,  
tell it like it is before la manteca runs down  
our chins and drips away.

**Ray González**