



Brenda Mann Hammack

Poems Based on the Life of Frida
Kahlo

Accident

17 September 1926

One day she'll paint more wounds than Saint
Sebastian's.

One day: Judas skeleton will peer through canopy
as she, fish beneath
ice or else coffin lid, prepares
to flop.

Beneath quilt agave: tongue-blossoms.

She'll have no scaffold, then, only bed
arboretum
and necklace: thorned hummingbird.

I am always undressed:
anatomical model;
écorché; pus-red.

My finger pads
shriveled;
my womb shell,
unebbed.

Hear my conch shush
as it empties. Hear me

strangle, then laugh.

The Love Embrace of the Universe,
the Earth (Mexico),
Diego, Me, and Señor Xolotl

I dandle you on lap like bee-stung fetus,
pickled Cupid. And all around, tendrils,
luminous, finger. Maguey cusps
us hard. Even *itzcuintli* dog nestles

into hand (earth pap; pod lactase), while
I leak blood. When third eye pocks
and moon spuds, two below wink bright.
Fire-flower seems igneous rock

by comparison. If I am Cassiopeia,
you are Olmec god. So, what
is not my fault? I am no Pietà,
but suffer mother's lot.

Our mother, Mexico, is no Golgotha.
But, in her arms, even I can hold you up.

Brenda Mann Hammack 's poetry has appeared in *Mudlark*,
Pedestal, *Arsenic Lobster*, *The North Carolina Literary*
Review, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. She
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She teaches at Fayetteville State University.