

ADELA NAJARRO

What Happened at the Barbecue below the Momotombo Volcano

Whenever the gods and goddesses of volcanoes meet up for a barbecue, they gather at Chantico's place. Her fat iron woodstove breathes fire. The first to show up are always the dwarfs and giants. They rise out of Icelandic snow with a tremble and shake, then lug in coolers filled with vodka shooters. Hephaestus is a little late. He brings the tea set and silverware, having turned rage into art in his studio at a prominent address on Piccadilly Square. Heph is still steaming after being conceived by pure female jujú and thrown off a cliff. He went free-falling for twenty-four hours. Even though he landed on his feet, he never could walk right. Out back by the cascading red flowers of the banana trees, Vulcan sets up tiki torches to keep away the buzz. There's a Twitter feed on him about complicity in forging lances for conquistadores, Remington rifles for US Yankee banana companies, and AK-47s for the School of the Americas. It's rumored he had a hand in welding jeeps, grenades, high-speed bullets, and land mines for Somoza. He did the same for the Sandinistas, the same for the Contras, the same for this army, for that army. Vulcan doesn't discriminate. Anywhere heat is needed to forge a cause of destruction, he's willing to oblige. But he's so long-winded and never gets to the point that in order to cope, Mount St. Helens begins to layer charcoal while Pele pulls out a Zippo lighter. The women spark an idea while tending the barbecue smoke and flames. Why not create a train of volcanoes so that each child born on Central American soil will carry the power of fire in their left pinky? It can begin with an Aztec mother drying corn. After she ascends the slopes of Momotombo for flame to heat *el comal*, a freckle will be born of fire and from then on all children of the Americas will carry an affinity for the left and all that burns.

Adela Najarro is the author of three poetry collections: *Split Geography*, *Twice Told Over*, and *My Childrens*, a chapbook that includes teaching resources. With *My Childrens*, she hopes to bring Latinx poetry into the classroom so that students can explore poetry, identity, and what it means to be Latinx in U.S. society. Every spring semester, she teaches a Poetry for the People workshop at Cabrillo College where students explore personal voice and social justice through poetry and spoken word. More information about Najarro can be found at her website: www.adelanajarro.com.

GARY IRVING

Wrath, 2017
Mixed media on canvas within
a handmade frame,
36.5 x 22 x 5 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST