POETRY

Unanswered Prayers

by Jesimiel Williams



"Resplendor Profundo y Desconocido" by Zino Haro

Tint Journal, no. (), www.tintjournal.com

Copyright © 2026 by Tint - ESL Literary Journal and Association.

I cannot speak her language, my mother,
Yet it calls to me, distorted to my hearing.
I answer with a borrowed tongue, born of subservience,
Patched with fragmented understanding, a disharmony.

My tongue is no longer raw, flagrant, and unburned,
Devoid of the carvings of civilization.
I, once the wood of a forest uncarved,
Am now crafted and shaven down for amusement.

They draw to me, my father's hands,
Wrapped in the tapestry of heritage,
Soiled with the dust of the earth he kissed to honor our elders.
Draped in the dull fabric of modernity,
I envy their crowns, Geles, and Filas.

Coated in shea butter and the esoteric patterns of the Ori,
Our ancestor weeps at her loss to the gods of stone, glass, and chrome.
Her children are hers no more, drowned in the tides of modernism,
The weaving of her rich clothing unwinds at my betrayal.

Tomorrow, I begin to weep for my own children,
As they do not speak her language and have no home to return to.
Glowing glass screens promise to trace the branches of a family tree with no trunk,
And numbers point to cultures that are now only names.

My children remain orphans of a culture I have drowned,
But when I plead with the ghosts of my ancestors,
Hoping to mend the severed ties with our shared blood, scarlet threads,
I remember that I cannot invoke spirits whose tongue I do not speak,
And whose gods I have scorned.

Copyright © 2026 by Tint - ESL Literary Journal and Association.