

IPHIGENIA  
CRASH LAND  
FALLS ON THE  
NEON SHELL  
THAT WAS ONCE  
HER HEART

(A rave fable)

inspired by Euripides'  
IPHIGENIA AT AULIS

*Caridad Svich*

**BROADWAY PLAY PUBLISHING INC**

224 E 62nd St, NY NY 10065

212 772-8334 fax: 212 772-8358

BroadwayPlayPubl.com

IPHIGENIA CRASH LAND FALLS ON THE NEON  
SHELL THAT WAS ONCE HER HEART

© Copyright 2004, 2012 by Caridad Svich

All rights reserved. This work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America.

No part of this publication may be photocopied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher. Additional copies of this play are available from the publisher.

Written permission is required for live performance of any sort. This includes readings, cuttings, scenes, and excerpts. For amateur and stock performances, please contact Broadway Play Publishing Inc. For all other rights contact Elaine Devlin Literary, 20 W 23rd St, NY NY 10010, e-mail: [edevlinlit@aol.com](mailto:edevlinlit@aol.com).

First printing November 2012

ISBN: 978-0-88145-541-0

Book design: Marie Donovan

Page make-up: Adobe Indesign

Typeface: Palatino

Printed and bound in the U S A

## CONTENTS

<i>About the author</i> .....	<i>iv</i>
<i>Introduction by Amy Littlefield</i> .....	<i>vii</i>
IPHIGENIA CRASH LAND FALLS ON THE NEON SHELL THAT WAS ONCE HER HEART .....	1
<i>Afterword by the author</i> .....	71

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caridad Svich is a U S Latina playwright, translator, lyricist and editor whose works have been presented across the U S and abroad at diverse venues, including Borderlands Theater, Denver Center Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Gala Hispanic Theatre, Repertorio Espanol, 59East59, McCarren Park Pool, Miracle Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Repertorio Espanol, 7 Stages, Salvage Vanguard Theatre, Teatro Mori (Santiago, Chile), ARTheater (Cologne), and Edinburgh Fringe Festival/U K. She received a 2012 OBIE Award for Lifetime Achievement in the theatre, and the 2011 American Theatre Critics Association Primus Prize for her play *The House of the Spirits*, based on the novel by Isabel Allende. She has been short-listed for the PEN Award in Drama three times, including in the year 2010 for her play *Instructions for Breathing*. Among her key works: *12 OPHELIAS* (a play with broken songs), *ALCHEMY OF DESIRE/DEAD-MAN'S BLUES*, *ANY PLACE BUT HERE*, *IPHIGENIA CRASH LAND FALLS ON THE NEON SHELL THAT WAS ONCE HER HEART* (a rave fable), *FUGITIVE PIECES*, *GUAPA*, *IN THE TIME OF THE BUTTERFLIES* (based on the novel by Julia Alvarez), *Love in the Time of Cholera*, (based on the novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez), *THE WAY OF WATER*, *THE TROPIC OF X* and the multimedia collaboration *The Booth Variations*.

She has been profiled in *American Theatre* and *The Huffington Post*, among others. She has edited several books on theater including *Out of Silence: Censorship in Theatre & Performance* (Eyecorner Press), *Trans-Global Readings and Theatre in Crisis?* (both for Manchester University Press) and *Divine Fire* (BackStage Books). She has translated nearly all of Federico Garcia Lorca's plays and also dramatic works by Julio Cortazar, Lope de Vega, Calderon de la Barca, Antonio Buero Vallejo and contemporary plays from Mexico, Cuba and Catalonia. Among her awards: a Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship at Harvard University, a T C G/Pew National Theatre Artist Residency, an N E A/T C G Fellowship, Thurber House Fellowship, the HOLA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Playwriting, the Whitfield Cook Award for New Writing from New Dramatists, the Rosenthal New Play Prize, and the 2009 Lee Reynolds Award from the League of Professional Theatre Women awarded annually to a distinguished female artist for their commitment to social and political change in the arts.

She is alumna playwright of New Dramatists, founder of NoPassport theatre alliance & press (<http://www.nopassport.org>), Drama Editor of *Asymptote* journal of literary translation, associate editor of Routledge/U K's *Contemporary Theatre Review* and contributing editor of TheatreForum. She holds an M F A in Theatre-Playwriting from U C S D, and has taught creative writing and playwriting at Bard College, Barnard College, Bennington College, Ohio State University, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, and Yale School of Drama. She is an entry in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Latino Literature. Website: [www.caridadsvich.com](http://www.caridadsvich.com)



Juárez's Dead Girls:  
De-romanticizing feminicidio in Caridad  
Svich's IPHIGENIA...A RAVE FABLE  
Amy Littlefield

In the lead sentence of a 2009 article about the murders of hundreds of young women in the Mexican border city of Juárez, one Los Angeles Times reporter wrote: "The streets of Juarez are swallowing the young and pretty."

This dramatic lead, like much of the writing done about the rapes and murders of women in Juárez, romanticizes the crime by drawing attention to the youth and beauty of the victims.

But there's nothing pretty, romantic or even mysterious about the situation in Ciudad Juárez, where at least 464 women have been murdered since 1993, according to the Mexico City-based newspaper La Jornada.

Many of the women have been young workers in the border city's maquiladoras, factories famous for their abusive working conditions. Many have been sexually assaulted before being murdered. A few arrests have been made, but at least one investigation has shown that police and government officials are involved in the violence. At the very least, the response of the authorities has been inadequate.

While news reports have often responded with superficial dramatizations, Caridad Svich's 2004 play *IPHIGENIA CRASH LAND FALLS ON THE NEON SHELL THAT WAS ONCE HER HEART* (a rave fable) dramatizes sexual violence in order to make a point. The play is set in an unnamed Latin American city where a violent general is plotting to sacrifice his daughter (*IPHIGENIA*), believing her death will save his political career. *IPHIGENIA* is a multimedia and multi-sensory experience replete with gender-bending, sexual imagery, absurdism, confusion, and Greek inevitability. It's an acid trip, and it's meant to saturate and provoke. But I'd like to highlight one aspect of the play that I found fascinating: the playwright's decision to cast Juárez's dead girls as men.

The imagery of pink crosses with women's names written on them and references to the "dead factory girls" connect the play's setting to Juárez. But the murdered women—who Svich calls *fresa* or "strawberry" girls, a term that can mean rich or snobby in Mexican slang—are cast as men in drag. The decision to cast the "dead girls" as men messes with the image of the young, beautiful, dead female body. In at least one version of the play, the *fresa* girls are cast in overdone doll makeup, wearing clothes that are too small. Such imagery satirizes the over-emphasis on female bodies in reports about sexual violence. Dressing male bodies up as "fresa girls" dramatizes the process of presenting death as beautiful or romantic. But Svich takes it a step further, challenging the privileged tendency to romanticize feminicidio. At one point, the wealthy and privileged general's daughter, who is dancing her way to a rave in order to escape her own inevitable murder, yearns to be a *fresa* girl—a victim of sexual violence and murder:



IPHIGENIA: I want to be just like you, girls.

FRESA GIRL 3: Like us?

IPHIGENIA: Names on a wall. Written by lovers who caress me.

FRESA GIRL 3: Caress us?

IPHIGENIA: You are beautiful girls.

Her naivete about the dead girls, murdered brutally by “lovers” outside dance clubs, indicts the naive reader or viewer. There is nothing beautiful about a dead body—even a young, female one—even one found outside a dance club.

Svich’s strategic casting decision messes with canonical conventions of victimhood and confronts the idea that beautiful women somehow deserve to be raped—or that raping or killing a beautiful woman is either more or less violent than killing a less attractive (*Or less feminine*) victim. The casting of men in drag as “girls” also draws attention to violence against transgender and transsexual people and makes the point that sexual violence is not just a girl’s problem. Despite attempts by the play’s protagonist to dress up murder with drama, drugs and dancing, there is nothing romantic about this death—or its inescapability.

*Amy Littlefield is a Providence-based journalist and an editor at the global feminist blog Gender Across Borders ([www.genderacrossborders.com](http://www.genderacrossborders.com)), where this article was originally published as part of its Theatre Rape series on January 6, 2010.*

*Juarez’s Dead Girls: de-romanticizing feminicidio* copyright 2010 by Amy Littlefield.



IPHIGENIA CRASH LAND FALLS ON  
THE NEON SHELL THAT WAS ONCE  
HER HEART

The play received its world premiere at 7 Stages in Atlanta, Georgia in January 2004. The cast and creative contributors were:

IPHIGENIA ..... Heather Starkel  
ACHILLES/FRESA GIRL 3 (GHOST  
GIRL OF JUAREZ).....Adam Fristoe  
ADOLFO/FRESA GIRL 1 (GHOST  
GIRL OF JUAREZ)/VIRTUAL MC/  
SOLDIER X/GENERAL'S ASS.....Ismail Ibn Conner  
CAMILA/VIOLETA IMPERIAL/  
HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE ..... Kristi Casey  
ORESTES/FRESA GIRL 2 (GHOST  
GIRL OF JUAREZ) /NEWS ANCHOR/  
VIRGIN PUTA ..... Justin Welborn  
*Director* .....Melissa Foulger  
*Scenic design*.....Ashlee A White  
*Costume, makeup & tattoo design* .....Emily Gill  
*Lighting design* ..... Rich Dunham  
*Sound design*..... Brian Ginn  
*Video design*..... Sabina Maja Angel  
*Live action video* .....Heidi S Howard  
*Properties design*..... Patrick Campbell  
*Dramaturg* ..... Steven Yockey

## CHARACTERS

*IPHIGENIA, a spinning girl of privileged means, she's used to being in the public eye, she's breaking down*

*ACHILLES, a transgendered glam rock star, beautiful and damaged (On video and live); Also (may) play FRESA GIRL 3, GHOST GIRL OF CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHORUS.\**

*ADOLFO, IPHIGENIA's father, a contained and ambitious general (On video and live); Also plays: VIRTUAL M C, an obscene, liquid, techno-trip-hop vision (On video);*

*GENERAL'S ASS, a mask from the satyr play, part commedia role, part Burroughs-like dream; SOLDIER X, a mercenary, who has no passion left; and FRESA GIRL 1, GHOST GIRL OF CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHORUS.*

*CAMILA, IPHIGENIA's mother, a narcotized prop wife possessed of a fierce hauteur (On video and live); Also plays: VIOLETA IMPERIAL, an ageless apparition, a messenger and prophet, earth-bound; and HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, a mask from the satyr play, a little lost and seriously messed up.*

*ORESTES, IPHIGENIA's baby brother, an addicted, spewing child with an adult voice (On video); also plays: NEWS ANCHOR, a plastic icon on the T V (On video and live);*

*VIRGIN PUTA, a mask from the satyr play, who is IPHIGENIA's other twin. GLASS-EYED MAN (On video), A SPECTER; and FRESA GIRL 2, GHOST GIRL OF CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHORUS.*

*Time: The present. An unnamed country in the Americas during a time of unrest.*

*Setting: The frame of an aircraft hangar.*

*Dust, dirt, and a stained party dress nailed to a battered wall. Oddly dyed carnations on the ground. The wall is jagged and impossibly high. A bank of surveillance cameras to one side: the silent, red eye.*

*Production & script notes: There are Spanish words and phrases incorporated in the text, which are either translated directly by a character or can be determined from context. No “Hispanic” accents should be used.*

*Live feed, pre-recorded video, photo stills, and projections are all part of the visual landscape of this play. Lo-tech and high-tech approaches are equally encouraged, depending on production resources.*

*Interactive, immersive staging is encouraged.*

*Doubling and tripling of roles suggested by author is preferred, for dramaturgical reasons, but other doubling options may be explored, depending on needs of production.*

*Melodies to original songs may be obtained by contacting the author, or the author’s lyrics may be re-set by another composer.*

*The FRESA GIRLS should be preferably played by men. If ACHILLES is not doubled, then FRESA GIRL 3 should be played by an additional actor.*

*(As the music lightens up, the voice of the VIRTUAL M C is heard.)*

VIRTUAL M C: Listen up, children,  
or you will lose your way in this neo-psychedelic  
maze.

There are rules here, you see.

Even in this grand party  
of electro-tragic proportions

We have to submit to authority.

Are you willing to submit yourself to me?

Say you will, say you will, lovers and freaks,

Cause if you don't, you'll never please me,  
and I like to be pleased;

Don't we all like pleasure in this regulated state of  
supreme ecstasy?

Okay, okay, sluts, so this is what you do,  
this is what I need:

If you want to find your way out,

there's the one you came in,

and the way opposite,

just like Orpheus and pinche Eurydice;

If you got a call waiting,

a beep beep on your beep beep mobile ringing the  
latest tone from the acid police,

Shut that phone off, and shut it good.

Vibrate in the boudoir of your dreams.

And if you like me,

if you really, really give your head up

for this baby border tragedy

then come on back, swing on by,

tell your friends that the rave  
keeps spinning...

A little pseudo amyl nitrate  
and we're ripped fine to the bone  
In this plastic synthetic hard-core fantasy  
we call a new century.

But hey, sluts, at the end of a crap-ass day  
there's nothing sweeter  
than the feel of my virtual tongue  
on your scarred knees.



## Prologue

*(In the distance is heard the chorus to Christoph Gluck's opera "Iphigenia in Aulis" [1774]. It is remixed to a techno beat. In the background, an image is projected on screen: IPHIGENIA, in a pink Chanel outfit, sits next to ADOLFO in a military coat.)*

*(In the foreground, live, ADOLFO and CAMILA sit ready for a press photograph. IPHIGENIA is at their side. She wears a double of the pink Chanel outfit in the video image.)*

ADOLFO: There once was a young woman who lived in a small house by the sea, and the man who loved her.

*(In the foreground, live, ADOLFO kisses IPHIGENIA on the lips.)*

*(In the background, image on the screen: slowly, IPHIGENIA's outfit begins to peel off her body and her skin begins to burn, while ADOLFO continues sitting, his body warm inside his coat.)*

ADOLFO: He loved her so much that he would do anything for her.

*(In the foreground, live, ADOLFO kisses IPHIGENIA on the lips again.)*

ADOLFO: This man was her father. He was a general. He had lived with fame at his side all his life. He envied others.

He even envied his daughter from time to time.

*(In the background, image on the screen: A GLASS-EYED MAN with a cane in hand, a cane with a snake's head as its scepter, looks at ADOLFO and IPHIGENIA in flames.)*

ADOLFO: The father could tell his daughter was not happy living in the small house, which held her day and night.

He could see that the low ceiling hurt her head,

And her feet couldn't move without touching the edge of the front door.

He liked looking at her.

He liked having her in the house for safe-keeping.

*(The cry of baby ORESTES is heard.)*

ADOLFO: But he would catch her looking out.

Out the window of the small house, and the garden, out toward the sea.

*(In the foreground, live, IPHIGENIA looks out, away from her father, who holds her by the hand.)*

ADOLFO: "Dear, sweet Iphigenia," the father would think.

*(Title card on screen: "How much for her flesh?")*

*(Image on screen: the GLASS-EYED MAN looks at the burning woman who was once IPHIGENIA, and at the warm man who is ADOLFO. The GLASS-EYED MAN's stare fills the screen.)*

*(In the foreground, live, IPHIGENIA's eyes are drawn to those of the GLASS-EYED MAN on the screen.)*

*(Title card: "How much for her skin?")*

ADOLFO: The young woman suffered from vanity. But she never told her father.

*(In the background, image: IPHIGENIA's face is reflected in the eyes of the GLASS-EYED MAN.)*

ADOLFO: Iphigenia never told her father anything,  
despite his love for her.  
And her father thought of nothing,  
nothing at all.

*(In the foreground, live, ADOLFO, CAMILA, and IPHIGENIA are caught in the camera's flash, in tight, frozen smiles, as their photo is taken.)*

*(In the background, image fills the screen: flames and a pink outfit ash.)*

*(In the distance, the chorus to Gluck's opera remixed to a techno beat fades.)*

*(In the background, only the press photo can be seen on the screen.)*



## PART ONE

### **IPHIGENIA'S FLIGHT (from the City)**

*(The voice of the VIRTUAL M C is heard calling out in the darkness:)*

VIRTUAL M C: *(Voiceover)* The next, the next sound that you hear... the next sound you hear will be...

*(Ambient trance music fades up.)*

*(In the background on a screen, a T V NEWS ANCHOR sits behind a desk. He is "on the air.")*

NEWS ANCHOR: It is estimated that  
one thousand one hundred and ten people have dis dis  
disappeared today  
In this land of guerrilleros  
and other corporate revolutionaries.  
General Adolfo will not confirm  
the disappearances,  
But will say that all citizens must vote for him in this  
week's elections,  
Which already threaten  
his current standing in office,  
as the opposition is starting to gain ground.  
The general will need a miracle  
to stay in office.

*(In the foreground, live, in a garden, IPHIGENIA is revealed in light: a blindfold over her eyes, and a branch in her hand. She wears a designer dress. There is a piñata over her,*

*dangling from the air. The piñata is of a large frog, with a long, relentless tongue.)*

NEWS ANCHOR: But if some great personal tragedy were to befall him,  
it is possible the country  
would embrace him again.

No one can resist the tug of the human heart.

One senseless death, of a rich girl  
and we will be united in grief,  
sorrow, and peace.

Do you hear me, Iphigenia?

*(IPHIGENIA turns slightly toward the screen.)*

NEWS ANCHOR: Do you hear me?

IPHIGENIA: Iphigenia was born  
centuries upon centuries ago.

I have watched her grow up,  
only to see her die over and over,  
story upon story.

I have lived inside her skin

Which has been rearranged

So that she will always remain a young girl

With delicate wrists and tender breasts.

And I have kept silent.

I have done my father's doing,

I have honored my mother's way.

I have let myself be adored

by the far-away gaze

Of a crowd who wants

to get a look at the girl,

a good look at the girl,

Whom fortune has blessed.

And now on this day of saints,

All I want is to be free of Iphigenia,

To be free of her certain fate.

*(The specter of CAMILA, IPHIGENIA's mother, is glimpsed through the garden, and through the camera's surveillant eye. She shout-sings:)*

CAMILA: Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you, daughter?

*(In the background, on the screen, the T V NEWS ANCHOR looks on.)*

*(Behind him a blur of fragments of newscasts real and imagined swirls: a mix of atrocities and shiny products ready for mass consumption.)*

NEWS ANCHOR: In the city today, Iphigenia, the general's daughter, had a birthday. It was a private affair. Sources will not say what she was given, but it is estimated that there were a lot of presents, many of them from Cartier.

*(In the foreground, IPHIGENIA strikes the piñata. She takes off the blindfold.)*

*(The piñata tips for a moment, then releases a shower of dead black birds and dried black petals. Freeze)*

*(Light splits IPHIGENIA into harsh angles.)*

NEWS ANCHOR:

Some say this will be Iphigenia's last birthday, this could not be confirmed.

Nothing can be confirmed these days.

But one thing is certain:

it will only be a matter of time before death will find our beloved girl.

It's all a matter of time down here, in the "ass of the continent,"

Called such

by great military and diplomatic entities who have never lost the fever

of their ambition,  
Before death finds us all.

Do you hear me, Iphigenia? Do you hear me?

*(The specter of CAMILA re-appears through the garden.)*

CAMILA: Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you going?

IPHIGENIA: I'm going  
to the northernmost point of the city.  
I'm going to shake loose the bad luck piñata  
that has rained down on my head  
black birds and black wings.  
I'm going to dance  
in the safe of an aircraft hangar  
that's been turned into a ballroom.

*(In the near distance, ACHILLES is heard singing a vocal  
intro line from The Deluge.)*

ACHILLES: *(Sings)* War is over,  
the gods are over,  
everything,  
everything is over...

IPHIGENIA: And I'm going to let  
my body reign  
over the ragged people with their pale gleam.

*(Ambient trance music grows louder, as ACHILLES' vocal  
line repeats and fades into the mix.)*

IPHIGENIA: I'm going to ooh, and aah.  
I'm going to let my body be.

And stop, stop being the general's daughter  
who lives in a walled-up garden  
by the light of the police.

*(The specter of CAMILA re-appears. She is narcotized, half-  
asleep.)*

CAMILA: Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you,  
daughter?



IPHIGENIA: Iphigenia  
is spun out onto a dark street.  
Fragments of words  
fall upon her as she tries to forget who she is ....  
Dear gods, let me be anyone but Iphigenia.

Erase my memory, escape my death.  
Only let me spin, oh gods, let me spin,  
for what I seek is an angel's rest.

*(The specter of a heavily narcotized CAMILA fades through the surveillant eyes.)*

*(She is a blurred image reduced to a tight close-up of soft teeth.)*

CAMILA: Iphigenia...

IPHIGENIA: Iphigenia  
sends herself into a phantasmagoric orbit:  
a wasteland of factories and blood-red tracks.  
She is nearing  
the northernmost edge of the continent.

*(CAMILA disappears through the distorted lens of the camera, as does the T V NEWS ANCHOR's face from the screen.)*

*(The red eye remains, occasionally blinking.)*

IPHIGENIA: There is a cross  
painted on a factory wall,  
a large pink cross  
painted over a woman's scrawled name.

*(Light catches a pink cross that is painted on a factory wall's façade.)*

IPHIGENIA: I look to it for comfort. *(She reads the name written on the wall. Sings)* Adina...

*(IPHIGENIA tries to touch the cross, which fades at her touch.)*

*(Light catches another pink cross, another name.)*

IPHIGENIA: (*Sings*) Natacha...

(IPHIGENIA *tries to touch the cross. It fades.*)

IPHIGENIA: Who are these girls?

(*Out of a pale neon strip, VIOLETA IMPERIAL appears. She is a prematurely aged woman. She pushes a small cart filled with half-cooked chicken pieces.*)

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Girls  
in newly sewn dresses. I see them.  
Not like you. I can see you're different.  
That's a nice dress. You buy it?  
I make dresses. Cheap.  
You want me to make you a dress?  
I can make it right now.  
I got needle and thread. See?  
What kind of dress do you want, girl?  
With ruffles? Cut on the seam?  
Come. I make it for you.

IPHIGENIA: No.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Why not?  
You don't like Violeta?  
You don't like Violeta Imperial?  
Have a piece of chicken. I got legs and wings. For  
running, and flying, girl.

IPHIGENIA: I'm not hungry.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: The aircraft hangar  
is a bit further on. You'll need your strength.

IPHIGENIA: How'd you know where I was headed?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're all in shadow, girl. I can  
barely see you. ...Hey, aren't you—?

IPHIGENIA: No.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Yes, you are.  
You've the same face.  
You're the asshole's daughter.

IPHIGENIA: My father's not an ass—

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Take a good look. Take a look at Violeta Imperial. (*She opens jacket to reveal a map of scars on her body. The map of scars is also reflected in a photographic image on the screen.*) This is your father's doing.

IPHIGENIA: He wouldn't...

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: His men  
took me into a room  
and cut me open with a blade.  
You hear screams?  
In the dry streets  
convulsing with electric signs?  
Those are the screams of the innocent,  
the tortured, the disappeared  
that find themselves in a potter's field.

IPHIGENIA: You're not in a potter's field.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Some are left.  
We're reminders.  
A walking warning for others  
who might wish to speak up against anything,  
or simply live in peace.

IPHIGENIA: What did you do?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: Nothing.

IPHIGENIA: What do you mean?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: I was taken  
into a cold room of a quiet house  
made of loose cinder block  
and cut open for nothing.  
For kissing a girl. "Pata," they called me.  
"We'll give you pata," they said  
as they cut through my flesh.  
I prayed to Eleggua,  
the god who opens all doors,

and leads all ways.  
the god who stands at the cross-roads  
with his conch shell eyes  
staring in the light.  
You pray to him, girl?

IPHIGENIA: To Eleggua?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You should pray to him. I prayed.  
"Prayer to Eleggua"

*(Sings)* Mi Dios, mi salvador, mi Eleggua.  
Tell me what to do.  
Tell me what to do.  
And I will.

*(Spoken)* And he said "Close your eyes."  
I fainted and let them cut me,  
as I dreamed about the girl I kissed,  
The sweet girl with brown eyes  
and a ruthless tongue  
who worked for the police,  
the sweet girl who betrayed me.

IPHIGENIA: I can have her reported. I can ask my  
father—

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: She's dead.  
I woke up in a field at the edge of the city with her  
body next to me.  
They had made a hole in her throat,  
and had pulled her tongue out  
through the hole.  
She was to be my reminder.  
I don't get much kissed now.  
Not with this body stitched up  
by an errant doctor's hands.  
Needle, thread and a splash of violet water. That's  
what I got.  
Violeta Imperial, Royal Violet water.  
Hence my name.

You want a piece of chicken?  
I got legs and wings.

IPHIGENIA: If my father knew-

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: We all love our fathers. It's a  
daughter's curse.

But ask him what he's done.  
And what you do by carrying his name.

IPHIGENIA: I am not my father's daughter.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: You're going to be a bastard now?

IPHIGENIA: Those men that took you and—they will be  
punished.

I will see to it. I will do whatever I can—

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: What are you going to do,  
Iphigenia, with your midnight lipstick and designer  
sheen?

IPHIGENIA: I was kidnapped last year.  
I was taken from my bed,  
stuffed inside a sack, and tossed into a jeep.  
I remember my nose bleeding.  
There was the smell of honeysuckle in the air.

I was taken out of the car  
and tossed onto a hard floor.  
I could feel the bruises  
forming themselves on my skin.  
I kept still in the darkness of the sack.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: In stillness lies virtue.

IPHIGENIA: You believe that?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: It's a saying.

IPHIGENIA: There were voices in another room. Loud  
voices, and boots.  
I could hear a song on the radio.

(VIOLETA IMPERIAL *begins to sing softly, underscoring.*)

"La Morna"

VIOLETA IMPERIAL: (*Sings*) All the young girls  
die in my arms  
die like wounded birds  
strangled by the palms.

IPHIGENIA: (*Continuing*) A torch song,  
the kind of song my mother sings  
alone in her room at night  
with the trace of vodka on her lips.  
The door to the room opened.  
A young man's voice said "Wake up, puta."  
When I opened my eyes,  
I felt strong hands poking at me. I screamed.  
The young man said  
"Shh. Your father's sending the money."  
And he pulled from deep inside  
his pants pocket some twine,  
and tied my hands together,  
and he took a thin strip of cloth  
from inside another pocket,  
and he gagged me.

(*Sings softly*) All the silent girls  
scream in the night  
letting their tongues fall  
upon the broken moonlight.

IPHIGENIA: He pulled me  
into another room  
and flashed a camera in my eyes.  
"This is for the papers," he said.  
"They'll pay for a picture of you."

(*Shift to the screen: T V NEWS ANCHOR is standing against  
a backdrop of a field dotted with palms. Sporadic gunfire.*)

NEWS ANCHOR: General Adolfo is trying to negotiate  
with the drug cartel  
To end its operation Project Zero

Which is making all the rich flee the country  
in fear that their sons and daughters will be taken  
away and held for ransom

There is no greater fear than the fear  
of losing prominent investors  
in what would be the largest growth  
of the multinational dollar  
in this country's history,

Either that

or having a loved one's ear sent in the mail.

*(Through the screen)* You hear that, Iphigenia?

IPHIGENIA: *(To the screen)* What?

NEWS ANCHOR: Nobody misses you.

*(Fade on the screen. Back to...)*