

Sonnet for My Cousin Xiomara, Who Tried to Teach Me How to Dance Salsa

The execution fails, though I'm an expert in the theory. Technically, I know exactly what to do. It's simple. Right foot forward then back, left foot back then forward.

It all goes wrong when I try to bring the hips in. Xiomara tells me to just feel the music.

Sentilo Sentilo she cries, tells me to pretend my hips are birds trying to escape from the cage of my body, she tells me to pretend my hips are words I've been holding onto for too long that need to be set free.

I say okay, but still my hips feel stiff, they don't budge, like tenants who refuse to be evicted from their home.