



Song of the Hummingbird

Graciela Limón

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From Aztec princess to slave and concubine, Hummingbird—or Huitzitzilin in her native Nahuatl—recounts her life during the Spanish conquest of Mexico. She experienced first-hand the wonder of the gods' arrival—those bearded, armored men who descended from their vessels on horseback—and the brutal devastation of her land and her people. She witnessed the obliteration of Tenochtitlán and suffered the loss of her identity, being forced to discard her traditional garb, to speak a language foreign to her tongue and to forsake her ancestral gods.

Expressing a confidence and freedom that women have strived for centuries to attain, Huitzitzilin passionately relates her tale to Father Benito, the priest who seeks to confess and convert her, to offer an absolution she neither needs nor wants. Instead, she forces him to see the conquest, for the first time, through the eyes of the conquered.

In *Song of the Hummingbird*, Limón pays homage to the pre-Colombian woman, celebrates the endurance of the human spirit in the face of cataclysm and mourns our collective loss of treasure more valuable than all the plundered gold.

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