

**Father's Heart**  
**by Yaddyra Peralta**

When they opened you, sawed  
through breastbone, did you feel  
the exerted, two-handed rending  
of your ribs?

So much work to see  
that knotted muscle:

that strutting heart  
of the mambo, the hustle, the punta,  
that heart of NYC, old Chelsea, dancing  
the night away. Fighting heart skulking  
through the jungles of Vietnam,  
truculent heart that hardly knows me now.

After the surgery you let me feed you,  
you start to tell me about *el indio Lempira*,  
the Lenca killed in ambush by the Spanish;  
the school kids in Honduras re-enact it every year.  
Despite your dark skin, you were often a Conquistador,  
the one who swiftly shot an arrow through the chief's heart.