



## Anthony Cody on Amalia L. Ortiz's *The Canción Cannibal Cabaret & Other Songs* (Aztlan Libre Press, 2019) and Bryan Thao Worra's *Before We Remember, We Dream* (Sahtu Press, 2020)

The first poem in Amalia L. Ortiz's latest collection, "The Canción Cannibal Cabaret & Other Songs," begins with an opening of the space to others. Cognizant that any movement begins with building a coalition, Ortiz begins "A message from Las Hijas de la Madre" with "Welcome, hijas y hombres. Welcome, fugees and flaggers. / Welcome, bossholes, broadbacks, and boots on the ground. / All you civilyoungs and warhouses who daily toe the line. / Worm workers in low appointments and Elect allies alike." This invitation is also for the reader to enter into a dystopian world where La Madre Valiente constructs a feminist revolution via oral histories, re-purposed historical poems, and songs of resistance. In the lyrical re-imagining, Ortiz includes Gloria Anzaldúa, The Clash, Leadbelly, Bob Dylan, and Patti Smith, to create a movement in which the feminist does not simply *inherit* the earth, but rather, survives to sing, educate, and organize the masses to build an inclusive society from the crumbling structures that are becoming far too real in our present reality.

Throughout, I found myself reading aloud to hear the rhythms foundationally built into the "poem songs" (shout out to Leticia Hernández-Linares for the naming) that refuse the silences and silencings, and that swell with an energy that is both rebellion and underground house party mixtape. The physical act of speaking the work into existence arrives at the third and final section of the collection, "Sheet Music," a section title which struck me when I turned the page and found literal sheet music for three of the poems in the collection. This reframed the work into the poet's deepest intention, a libretto of welcoming and engaging all into the fold to do more than passively listen from the audience, but rather to participate, to join in, to make revolutionary noise. A truth that circles back to the opening poem, where, fittingly, Ortiz closes with, "we now feed you the same nourishment that once fed us. And / you, when you are full enough to rock rebellion, can continue / the song." A song La Madre Valiente invites us to not only listen to, but sing to others, to everyone.