

By Lorna Dee Cervantes

Cherry plums suck a week's soak,
overnight they explode into the scenery of before
your touch. The curtains open on the end of our past.
Pink trumpets on the vines bare to the hummingbirds.
Butterflies unclasp from the purse of their couplings, they
light and open on the doubled hands of eucalyptus fronds.
They sip from the pistils for seven generations that bear
them through another tongue as the first year of our
punishing mathematic begins clicking the calendar
forward. They land like seasoned rocks on the
decks of the cliffs. They take another turn
on the spiral of life where the blossoms
blush & pale in a day of dirty dawn
where the ghost of you webs
your limbs through branches
of cherry plum. Rare bird,
extinct color, you stay in
my dreams in x-ray. In
rerun, the bone of you
stripping sweethearts
folds and layers the
shedding petals of
my grief into a
decayed holo-
gram—my
for ever
empty
art.

"Valentine" by Lorna Dee Cervantes, from *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger*. Copyright © 1991 by Lorna Dee Cervantes, Used with permission of Arte Público Press, www.arte.uh.edu

Source: From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger (Arte Público Press, 1991)