

**ALMOST
OBSCENE**

Almost Obscene

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Katherine M. Hedeem & Olivia Lott

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**ALMOST
OBSCENE**

RAÚL GÓMEZ

JATTIN

*translated by Katherine M. Hedeem
& Olivia Lott*

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I WAS LIKE WEED but they didn't smoke me

I HAVE FOR YOU my good friend
a Sinú River mango heart
fragrant
true
kind and tender
(What's left of me is a wound
a no man's land
a stone's blow
a blink of an eye
in a faraway night
hands slaying ghosts)
A word of advice
don't come across me

YOU TRY TO SMILE

and a bitter sigh brews
you mean to say love but say far-off
tenderness but teeth turn up
exhaustion but tendons tear
Someone raises solitudes in your chest
nails
tricks
ditches
Someone
your brother in death
captivates you catches hold of you drives you mad
and you defenseless
write him these letters

WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY remember Isabel
of the hopscotch beneath your patio's mamoncillo tree
the ragdolls that were our children
the railing where all the boats from Havana would dock filled with...
When you had golden eyes
like peacock feathers
and skirts stained with mango
Forget it
you don't remember
I on the other hand you couldn't tell today
No one's said anything
I keep throwing pebbles into the sky
looking for a place to rest my feet before I get too tired
Tracing and erasing shapes in the skin of the earth
and my children are rags and my dreams are rags
and I keep playing dolls in the spotlight on the stage
Isabel peacock eyes
now that you've got five children with the mayor
and a fancy chauffeur to take you around town
now that you wear glasses
when we see each other you shoot me a quick "how's life"
cold and impersonal
As if I still had one
As if I still had use for one