Tropical sacrifice
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Lucas de Lima
Where a coconut appears by page numbers,

explanations of corresponding references will be found in the endnotes.

While endnotes are meant to be read simultaneously with the poems,

they may also be read on their own.
in this dream i have the body of a chicken instead of a heroic bird.

i dream my way in & out of neofascist brazil, where i was born white before emigrating to the united states as a child.

variegating, my feathers take on shades of white, beige, brown & pink, an excess of vision thru my third eyelid.

this is how i escape the factory farm & learn to fly—

i am a colonized & colonizing animal
because my foremothers survived i open my eyes

to a spectrum of light, color & motion

broader than human sight.

at the farm’s edge, undomesticated

i can see thru myself, a species

of tropical decay.
i am a product of race mixture & rape

at the hands of european fathers.

i am
the beginning

of the end of the world

i reincarnate

with sisters & brothers

who were already here

before the chicken

or egg
this is the emanation of ancestors

a chicken’s uv light cone detects

at the border of human & nonhuman, female & male, north & south,

illness & health, spirit & meat.

this is how a flock

*breaks the lens of sacrifice.*

in the country whose territory slices

the lungs of the world

*the sky becomes  our open vein*
“the white people, they do not dream as far as we do. They sleep a lot but only dream of themselves”
—davi kopenawa, *the falling sky: words of a yanomami shaman* (trans. by nicholas elliott & alison dundy)
pinto: “chick” & slang for “penis” in brazilian portuguese
an orange bloom at dawn
behind the corpse of pinto’s father strewn on train tracks
a bird caught in his hair
the gasp of body vs. machine
drained fluids out of the egg pinto glowed in
his mother’s belly
his mother’s head
would never be the same
the moon like an overgrown infant
crushed her husband
“but pinto, you are the sky”
she would say
after dropping pinto on the floor
dragging & bruising the yellow soul
who made her husband kill himself
pinto is my lover

i tell my friends about the beak he simulates with his hand when he contacts the dearly departed

i haven’t given up flying with pinto
despite my fear of an invisible population in our room

bodies glimmer in pinto’s cornea, black or white

with or against us

i make a beak when i slide my hand inside pinto’s anus

his muscles emit rays, pulsating round my fingers

extracting from my wrist another bird body
to pry open the great wormhole in our room