

MINA

by: Kyoung H. Park

MINA was written for the Ma-Yi Theatre's Writer's Lab and presented as a reading at New Dramatists by the Ma-Yi Theatre Company (New York, July 2004). It was produced by Vital Theatre as part of Vital Signs 9 Festival at the McGinn/Cazale Theater (New York, December 2004). The production featured Deborah S. Craig as "Mina" and was directed by C. S. Lee.

CAST: Mina, late 20's. A Korean woman, raised in Peru, living in New York City.

TIME AND PLACE: New York City. Now.

*At rise: Mina stands alone on stage.
The stage is empty.*

MINA:

Soy una mina,
coqueta y feliz.
Toda mi vida
fue un trampolín.

From Lima to New York,
I've been there.
Cosmopolitan metrosexuals,
Inca men—beware.

Soy una bestia—
una furia! —
mujer asiática
con raíces latinas.

Esa soy yo.

This is me.

On a yellow island
named Jejudo,
solitary, solid, singular,
I was born.

But I grew up in Lima,
where people called me a mina—
a gal.
Funny enough—that's my *name*.

During the nineties, my parents
followed the Japanese,
to live under the rule of Fujimori—
the president of Perú back then.
Ironically, my father would never say
anything nice about the Japanese:

“No trust them!
They took advantage
of our people—
we fermented cabbage,
because we were poor.
We made kimchi

with onions, garlic and chili.
We let the ingredients fester
for months
before we ate it.
But the Japanese invaded our shores
stole our fish, and
they had raw, expensive sushi!”

Don’t think I’m judging.
I’m just relaying my father’s words.
“Cooking facts,” he said.

In New York,
my therapist calls facts a
trauma.
So I asked her:
His trauma or mine?

There was a silence.

They always want you to
answer your own questions.
They’re tricky, aren’t they?

I guess, looking back, Dr. Lee,
the trauma,
whether it was his,
or mine,
because history books said *this*,
but people said *that*,
were only facts.

Just facts.

Then again, little did I know that
I would fall in love with
a Japanese man.
A *Peruvian* Japanese man!

The shock just
made my father die.

“Mina-ya, no puede!
No puede!
You Korean woman,
you can’t Japanese marry.”

But dad, él es Peruano.

“Japanese blood is
in his body.”

Pero papá, he was born in Perú.
He doesn't even speak Japanese.
He speaks Spanish.

“Mina-ya, you marry
Peruvian,
you're children will be
mutants.”

Yes, Dr. Lee.
That's what he said:
“Mutants.”

“Mina-ya, Japanese men
invaded Korea
and raped our woman!
Not your mother,
but woman like your
great-grandmother.”

My omma,
she didn't say anything.
But she nodded.
And with that nod,
that silly domesticated
head-bobbing,
she said more than enough.

*So Mina, whose trauma do you think it is?
His or yours?*

I don't know Dr. Lee,
why don't you tell me
what *you* think?

*Well, I grew up differently.
I grew up in America.
I don't know what it's like
to be Peruvian.*

Well, Dr. Lee, you're
Korean too, aren't you?

Korean-American.

“Mina-ya, you
not love him.
You young!
You don’t know!”

Lo único que sé
es que te quiero.
Hombre peruano,
a tí te quiero.

Te quiero desde que naciste,
te quiero porque eres de esta tierra,
from this earth,
you have been born!

Me? I don’t know.
I wished I knew
where I belong.

“Mina-ya, tell me,
truthfully,
are you in love?”

I didn’t answer.

My omma started crying:
“*Oh-mo! Sae-sang he!*
Ai-gu,
ai-guuuu!”

“Mina-ya,
truthfully,
you pregnant?”

Me? Pregnant?
Yes,
I was pregnant.

My Asian blood
was multiplying with
the golden blood
of the Inca empire.
My child was conceived
on the lands

robbed from their splendor
by the Spanish conquistadores
that held the Inca king's brother
imprisoned.

And they told the king:

“You must fill this room with
gold,
this high up,
and when you give us that much,
we will release your brother.”

The Inca King complied—
his gold was shipped
to the Spanish kingdom
of Isabel la Católica
and the destitute people of Perú ,
who valued plumes from exotic birds
as currency worth more than gold,
were robbed of its treasures
but persisted against
the imperialists—
imperialists like the Japanese
that raped
my great-grandmothers,
made my forefathers
ferment their food
and now,
between one victim
of history
to another,
we made love.

Love so strong,
sex so mighty,
our wet passion
made life
through fusion.

*“Ai-guuuu, Mina-ya,
Ai-guuuuuu!”*

As my omma howled,
in greater pain than
I have ever heard,
my father collapsed.
He had a heart-attack,

dropped the bul-gogi
on the floor,
tipped over the table,
the table-stove
fell on the kitchen mantle
and the bul
lit
'till there was bul
all over the house—
and our house burned down,
and my mom cried
“*ai-guuuu*”
as my childhood home
collapsed.

The ashes were swept up
by the Pacific breeze,
crossed the Iguazu falls and
reached the Amazonic canopy.

My parents' labor,
sweat,
and tears
silently found sleep
between the puma
and the iguana.

“*Ai-guuu,*
ai-guuuu!”

My fathers last words
were that he wanted his
body buried in Jejudo.

So there we went.
My mother stayed with him.
She didn't want to be alone.

I did.

I left.

I came back to Lima
where the father of my child
said:

We were different.

That our love couldn't be.

All of sudden,
there was this pain in my stomach.
As I vomited for hours
and saw from my mouth,
everything that I had eaten in Korea,
regurgitated
on the grass of my beloved's garden,
I felt ill.

Everything I had eaten since
my father's death
had been miscooked.

I bled.
I bled our child away
and with the little *soles* left,
I bought a plane ticket
for one,
for just me
and my empty womb
and alone,
I am here.

Because I'm a mina,
a gal,
just a gal,
with no roots.

In Spanish, a mina
is also a mine.
And in my dreams,
I picture myself a
Korean mine,
which I dig deeper
into,
into myself I look,
within,
to find nothing but
rocks.

But sometimes, I dream that
if I go inside myself,
with a jackhammer
and a flashlight,
with dynamite

to burst my
insides
I find—
among the:
rubble, dust, and dirt—
happiness, for I mine
the Inca gold which once was robbed.

Lights fade.

END OF PLAY