

Pernil

Flesh ripped open, peppercorns and garlic cloves shoved inside the wound. Marinating for days with sofrito sazón and adobo. It sounds like a painful time but you endure it to make any birthday, Christmas, New Year, or Three Saints Day special.

Thick skin hard as armour ping pang resistant to a sharp heavy knife fat bubbling to the bottom redefining your shape, your transformation complete. An experience made for memory, getting in everyone's teeth.

Spending an entire day hard at work, alone in the stark bleak burning heat of an oven only to run a marathon underneath a broiler blinding like the mid-day sun. I wonder if it's anything like the home your grandparents lived in.

Do you hear the soothing shuffles the water makes across the shores? Or do you hear the coquis happily singing from leaves in El Yunke? Do you see people going to sleep under mosquito nets at night? Do you see men in parks making piragua for children? Or the kytes being flown outside of Castillo San Felipe del Morro? Can you taste the water in the air due to humidity and can you tell when it's going to rain based on how much it closes up your throat? Can you taste the miasma of despair and fear whenever the next hurricane is scheduled to rip through the island? Or are you too far away from the place where you were cultivated that all that makes you is some memorized herbs and spices and the mere knowledge of where you may have once come from?

We are no sabo made in a household with little proximity to the origin but you always pop out strong, I'm trying to follow suit.