



## The Immortals

**Makenzy Orcel**

**Nathan H. Dize, Translator**

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In Makenzy Orcel's *The Immortals*, a grieving woman vents her feelings on death and loss.

A Haitian sex worker cajoles her client, a writer, into recording the life of her protégé, who was killed in the 2010 earthquake. Despite the writer's coarse motivation for agreeing to the project, he records her harrowing story exactly as it's told.

To release her story, the self-declared whore pours out her anger and grief in disjointed fragments. The writer records them in short bursts, leaving plenty of room for reading between the lines and into the storyteller's silences. Some snippets are poetic philosophical musings, while others are blunt expressions of her pain. Despite her cynicism, she rails against the unfairness of a world that could take away someone as special as her little girl.

The storyteller struggles through her brutal recollections of the earthquake's aftermath and of her protégé's short life, all in the hope of honoring her bookish protégé with a slice of literary immortality. Along the way, she also immortalizes other whores whom she has known, as well as the fruitless quest undertaken by her protégé's hated mother to find her runaway daughter.

The story does not end so much as it stops when the storyteller has finished sharing what she has to say and must attend to other important matters. She is resolute despite her bereavement, very aware of her flaws but also committed to her own version of morality. No one else will help her in the face of bleak odds. Though she would not see it this way, she is her own lighthouse, illuminating her dark past and facing it head on.

*The Immortals* chronicles a harrowing period in the lives of one of Haiti's most neglected populations.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (November / December 2020)

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