

# I DON'T LIKE TELLING YOU WHAT I ATE

Viviane Vives

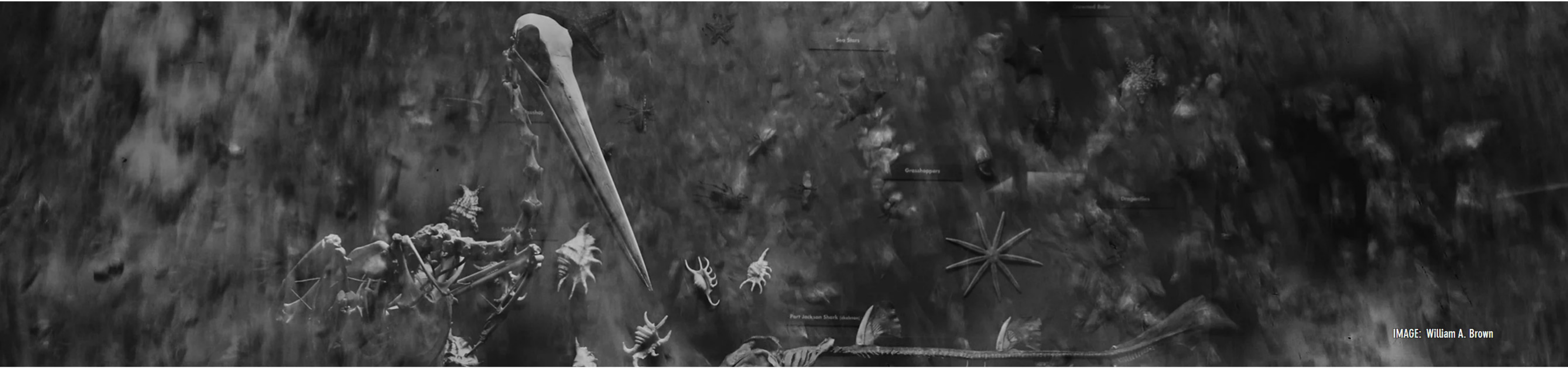


IMAGE: William A. Brown

**Viviane Vives** is a filmmaker, actor, photographer, and writer. She is a Fulbright scholar for artistic studies at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and her translations, poems, and short stories have been published internationally. Her work has been published in *Litro Magazine*, *The Write Launch*, and *Burningword Literary Journal*, among others. She was a finalist for the 2018 Philadelphia Stories' Sandy Crimmins National Prize in Poetry and a semifinalist of the American Short(er) Fiction Contest.

In these letters, written in 1960, is there love? Enough? I've always known it started with. A great love, but my sisters do not. Understand. Misinterpret what was, what could have been, what I say. Writing, transcribing, continuing . . . chewing. Fucking gerunds. Remembering.

*Yesterday I remembered your feet. I thought that they were a disaster. Full of bunions, with twisted toes.*

Mamá was a dancer.

*But they're yours . . . They're not bad! They also know how to dance. I like your feet. You have great feet Bambi! One day I'll let you wash them . . .*

*"I'm wasted—"*

*(I'm not, it's the song)*

*"But the best part is that I do not fall,  
for the strength of pride sustains me.*

*I am a pigeon flying by*

*through space*

*never in my flight*

*will you see me in a cage.*

*Glass after glass*

*bottle upon bottle*

*as I drink*

*I'm comforted . . ."*

*etc. etc.*

Is he drunk? (He is not, it's the song.) I never saw him drunk. Bambi, yes: she laughed when she drank. Her laugh scratched her throat. It really sounded like jejeje. Girl eternal.

*I don't like telling you what I do, in letters. There are people who even write what they ate. As if it matters! In my sleep, I ate a pizza made by you. I woke up dizzy . . .*

Mamá could not cook.

*Bambi, I want to see you. Coming Soon. You already know that Alberto desires to see you: "He needs you because he loves you." Also Alberto wants to be happy, what the heck! It's beautiful, the sun is out. It's very possible that I may receive the telegram today (I hate telegrams). How I laughed on the day of the "little road that time has erased. . . !"*

Time has erased almost everything. Yes. I want to ask what they laughed about that day. The song only speaks of the road that is not there. This book, when I finish it, may it remain. The rest—deleted. The good with the bad; their cool-as-fuck beauty. Mine. Their love, and mine; their selfishness. Despair. Both deaths: hideous. Bloody. May their deaths die too, with me, and with the walls of the house that melted. From the inside.

*Now, I never laugh like that. You neither. Actually, your life would no longer have any meaning without me. Good thing you have me forever.*

Sí. Yes. It's a horror piece.

*But I do not have enough with Bambi. When I marry Bambi, I will also have a lover: Judith ¡Yaya Pájara!*

Mamá was Bambi, Judith, Anne Marie, the Girl in the Forest. The Stranger That Left.

*Bambi, fifteen days is not enough. It takes many more days. Millions of days. The letters are few. In the letters you cannot give a kiss, caress, look, laugh, shut up, say and hear, think the same things at the same time, be at the same time, happy. In the letters I do not hear your bad Spanish accent, how your brain dances. The letters do not know how to dance a quick waltz in a kitchen.  
Je t'aime. Bambi, et toi?*

Chewing. Pizza? Nostalgia.

