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“Bessy Reyna is an honest poet. She writes unflinchingly of loss: a lost island, a lost lover, a lost moment. She faces the police beating of a friend or a father's drunken stupor with the same bravery. Yet she can also sense the fleeting poetry in a circle of fallen leaves, in the intimacy of bodies. Bessy Reyna is a clear-eyed guide to the world we see but don't see.”

—Martín Espada

“Like Panama, the country of her childhood, Bessy Reyna's poems provide a channel, a way to bridge east and west by reconciling the warring needs of the body, the mind and the heart. Whether Reyna is dancing with a stalk of sugar cane in Hartford, Connecticut, or in her birthplace of Cuba, poem after poem is as lively as a salsa. Like chewing *caña*, her poems ultimately reward with their hard-won sweetness, with the taste that leaves us wanting more.”

—Vivian Shipley

“Bessy Reyna knows the importance of language: ‘The last time we used / silence as bullets / we were mortally wounded / in the conflict,’ she says in the title poem of this new collection. Bilingual and bicultural, Reyna uses poetry both to confront and to stretch the boundaries of our ordinary thinking. Her poems cross borders of time as well as place, taking us to a territory where past and present, the personal and the political, even love and hate inform each other—a territory where, crossing ‘the frontiers of desire,’ even ‘life and death dissolve.’

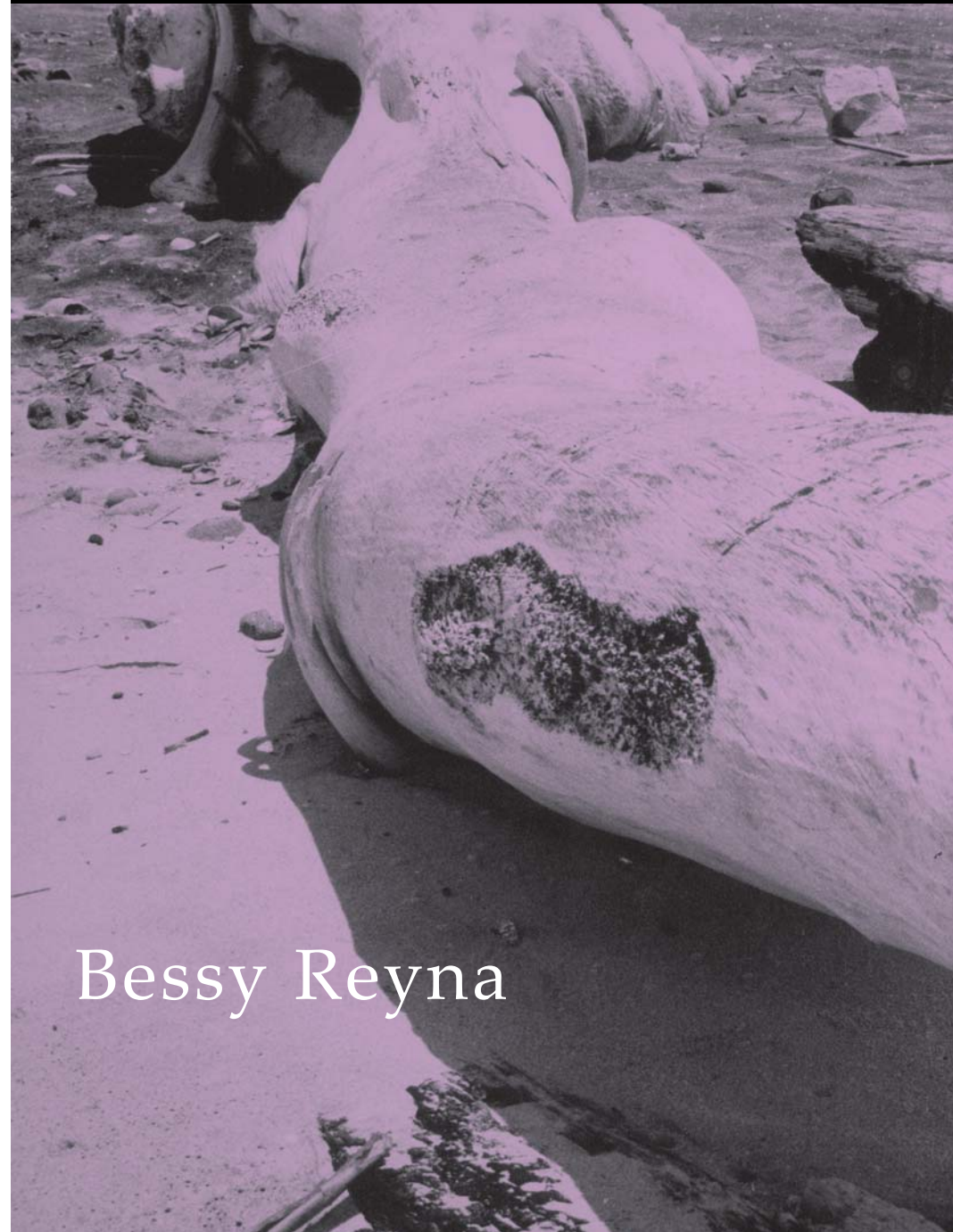
—Martha Collins

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# THE *Battlefield* OF YOUR BODY *El Campo de Batalla de Tu Cuerpo*



Bessy Reyna