The Slow History of a Sugar Beet

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Abstract
This thesis is a memoir of poetry and prose that attempts to navigate through the personal, emotional and spiritual discourses of an esoteric family, using inherited language to connect a poetic presence with a disjunctive and illusive history. The sugar beet is the metaphorical and literal model at the heart of the project. Various themes include, relationships, sexuality, contraception, divorce, trauma, mortality, and the nature of "self". It is a series of stories about loneliness and coming of age in a violent world, interspersed by poems which transition the reader through a narrative of childhood and parenting, looking through the lens of ancestral lineage. The family becomes characters in the imaginative drama of self, as the narrator attempts to understand the strange and wonderful spiritual knowledge and gestures. The poetry and prose push toward a transformative understanding about violence in a personal and social context.

Recommended Citation

Recovery of crystalline sugar from the sugar beet is not a simple procedure. In its life processes, the sugar beet forms many organic substances other than sucrose and takes up inorganic nutrient elements from the soil. These nonsucrose substances are also brought into solution of sucrose during processing and must be removed. Some are removed by liming and filtering, but those that remain inhibit crystallization of sucrose. This is how beet sugar is produced. The beets are washed and sliced. The juice which is high in sucrose is leached by hot water. It is then subjected to clarification, filtr...