

# Sophia rocha

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Sophia Rocha Mike Fraga CHI 100 November 16, 2012 Book Review The novel, *Song of the Hummingbird* by Graciela Limon, is a book about Huitzitzilin's encounters during the Spanish conquest and the coming of Cortes. There are many themes in this novel, such as war, religion, culture, sins and the ending of an Era for the Mexicas. But it does not start off of her telling her stories, but of a young monk named Father Benito Lara, who is called to hear her last confession, for she was very old and knew she was near the end of her long journey. Father Benito went to listen to Huitzitzilin everyday for she had much to say about her life and about her culture before and during the Spanish conquest. She told him some sins throughout their conversations, and when she did not talk about their sins, he would write down all that she was saying so he can record her side of what happened during the conquest, for he only heard teachings of how the Spaniards had seen the conquest. The novel starts of in a convent at Coyoacán in 1583. Father Benito is only 27, and Huitzitzilin is 82. As Huitzitzilin starts her story, it is spring in the year 1501 when she was born. She describes her growing up in her tribe and of her traditions and customs. Some of these disturbed the monk because he felt that they were devil worshipers and did not want to hear such chants for he feel the devil will try to pull him in. Huitzitzilin tried to tell him that she was not a devil worshiper, but she has gods of her own that she did worship. He was taught differently of her tribe and did not understand most of the things she had to say, but he still listened for he was fascinated by most of the things she had to say about her life and about her tribe. Graciela Limon is arguing for Huitzitzilin, for the way she wrote this novel explained in detail Huitzitzilin's journey through all her hardships she

had to face during the time of the Spanish conquests. Limon did not suppress how Huitzitzilin looked in any way throughout the novel. She wrote the story as if she was Huitzitzilin herself, and just wanted to have her story told. Huitzitzilin's character had a lot to say about her life and after every conversation she felt better after confessing her sins, for she felt a burden was being lifted of her shoulders. One theme of the novel is religion. Religion is a theme throughout the whole novel, for Father Benito kept referring to God and about his Christianity every time Huitzitzilin talked about her gods of about some of her traditions. " No! Don't mention the idols! " Father Benito's voice trembled, betraying the fear the god's name conjured his mind. " No? But if you don't allow me to speak of them, how can I explain the most important part of those events? " The monk was dumbfounded. Yet he had promised Father Anselmo that he would not allow allusion to those demons. He bit his lip in consternation because he couldn't help thinking that it would be equally difficult to speak of his own people without the mention of Jesus Christ. " He kept reminding her that it was a great thing that the Spaniards brought Christianity amongst them. She repeatedly told him that she did not believe in his ways or in God, for she only sought the forgiveness of Father Benito, not of God. " Will you forgive me? " " God forgives all sins if there is contrition. " " But will you forgive me? " In the end of the novel he understood why she kept asking for his forgiveness, for it was not for mercy or absolution but for understanding of her life. Another theme was sins, for Huitzitzilin confessed sins to Father Benito during her conversations. Her first sin was fornication with Zintle by the lake. But the way she told her sins to him bothered him for she told them in exact detailed of the way she

remembered it. Her second sin she told was abortion. She was pregnant with Zintles child and she went to a healer that knows about some herbs that can get rid of the unborn child. She was not sorry for that sin for her and the priest argued about it. She argued she did that for the sake of her own life, for if her husband to be found out about her fornication, he would have her killed. After hearing what her husband to be, Tetla, did to her the night of their wedding, he began to feel sorry for her.