

Virgil Suarez

FOR ELIAN GONZALEZ

What you will not remember is the land,
the way trees grew gnarled out of dark earth,
& bore no fruit. The avocados & mangos tasted
bitter, black fruit of regret. All that you forget,
in time, ceases to exist. What you will remember
is the water, the way the night grew from deep
below you to ink the entire sky, a map of heavy
longing, heavy loss, & your mother's voice
as she prayed to the saints & Santa Barbara
for your safe passage. In vain spoke the water:
*"En vano, por gusto, el mar traga la memoria,
el fuego de la distincia, la amargura."*
At night the wind sifts memories through windows,
billows curtains & mosquito nets like desire
for what cannot be remembered, what you cannot forget,
is the faint susurrus of the multitude of voices lost
at sea—like your mother's voice. The wind speaks
in riddles so you will listen closely, grow wire thin,
tall & proud, just like she would have wanted,
& one fine day you will look at the vastness
& distance of so much water, & it will beckon.
All you will remember drowns slowly in gulps.
Quiets so finally like the sound of one wave calling another.

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