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Madre de los Campos

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MADRE DE LOS CAMPOS

Miguel M. Morales

He wasn't good enough to look at her
but at the end of each week she'd wear a smile
that apologized for her skin.

He'd talk to her in a way that tried to diminish her.
He'd cheat her out of wages we'd earned with sweat.

Returning to the hot station wagon,
she'd hand everyone their money.
She'd pay herself last with what was left over.

Sitting next to her as she drove everyone home, I seethed.
I hated her for letting him talk to her that way
and for giving away our money to those lazy cabrones
who didn't work as hard
and who didn't pack their lunches
or even bring water.

I'd cry hot, angry tears that plowed the dirt on my face.
I vowed never to be as stupid as her.

When she'd drop the last person home,
she'd pullout the egg and chorizo burritos she made us early that morning
for lunch that day.
It was her lunch that she hadn't eaten.

And as my sisters and I shared mom's comida,
she'd give me a smile that apologized for hurting me
but not for loving me.

And I did the same.

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