Conqueror; Her Words

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**Conqueror**

In Laredo the radio blares *if the rain comes they run and hide their heads*. But when thunder rumbles we race to the parched yard only to miss drops spattering the dust. All night in front of a whirring fan, Tía and I suck ice cubes, anoint mosquito bites with garlic until our skin smells like supper. This dawn, Tía’s face is a mask of flour, sweat. She pulls a lemony disc from the oven, no, she lassos the sun! The eagle arrives. His wing beats pulse against our thighs as we fly south. Outside a great city, raindrops bounce off our whirling braids.
Her Words

I spoon rice
into her mouth.

I ask what
I should do.

Her malady renders
her words
a vapor,
hushed flurries.

But she makes her point—
spoon against a pot,
palms patting out a tortilla.

Her tap reminds me
the beans are getting cold.