

Natasha Marin

MALADE IMAGINAIRE



Back home his mamá is still sweat-stuck
to a folding chair. Her wide bottom welted
by bands of plastic and unrelenting time.
She examines the point in her palm
where her life-line fades and her son returns
with feet heavy as the yellow icebox carcass—
molting curls of sun-bleached paint.

He supposes that she is not thinking of him—
her big baby boy cut from her own
skin after 14 hours of rib-scraping mutiny.
She is only there—hoping for an Indian daughter-
in-law to make *douglas* with, so she can watch
the arch of their feet stiffen
like wet candle wax.

It is now 10:44 p.m. and Monsieur Duránge
is reading post-colonial theory. He is not
mesmerized by the machete-streak of orange
makeup along her chin. No part of him crumples
like her shoulders in that hot crevice of a kitchen.

She is not fingering the damp scarf of her hair
when he leaves ink prints on clean pages.