

On the Night of My Grandmother's Stroke

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I sat alone in the Chihuahuan Desert and cried
above the filthy surge of the Rio Grande
900 miles from where her sure hands hoisted
me high on her shoulders to pluck a peach
while the green lake rippled with summer
simmering with carp who surfaced at dusk
to swallow the raining grey cotton curling
their long dark bodies over in the sour light.
Where wide bluegill scale clouds skated
across the sky and I could hear the bones
she splintered and picked before pressing
the meat into her skillet bleeding in butter.
Where her bug zapper sang blue songs all night
lighting the path for soft does who sipped
and steamed and stretched their day's aches.
Where her stories like braided river stanzas
rushed blood through channels and veins
sourcing my lies with her lavender laugh.
I sat in the ornamented night watching planes
rise out of El Paso and wondered out loud
about the lives they carried in their blinking
bodies the dreams and pasts they housed
in their organs of distance and direction.
One half of my life behind me now sleeping
in the sage where snapdragons dance around
famished coyotes who gnaw and gnash.
The other half riddled in bright cryptic texts
of streaking 747s and sleepy satellites
scribing quotation marks around constellations.
Each one a traveling body without a border
unmistakable voices always moving away.