

True Love

When I met his enlightened eyes  
and stroked his finely-sanded

wooden belly painted leaf-green,  
I sensed a frog-shaped hole in my torso

empty all my life. Now my *alebrije*  
perches on my nightstand

and I no longer fear the descent  
into dream. His amphibian smile leads me

across the reed bridge strung over  
a river gorge. I trust my dream feet

on slick rope because he knows water  
and grip. His back is speckled

like cottonwood duff alighting on ponds  
and like all mystery

is multi-hued so I can spot him  
even in murky water as he leads me

through shallows and reeds up the path  
to a hole in willow bark, a nest

where I curl, slow my breath,  
my heartbeat, awaiting the new.

Return: Sunday Morning in Watts

There's the yard where Mom threw feed  
to fierce *pollitos* raised to fight as cocks,  
mad puffs, quick beaks that pecked her feet.

And from the bright pink house, *rancheras* trumpet  
like they did when Rosa's 'uncles' visited  
one hour at a time after church.

Mom takes my arm and we enter church,  
the Mass still said in Spanish, the same grim saints,  
*El Señor* a manikin, his beard glued on imperfectly.

From church we stroll to her old school and she returns  
the smiles of everyone, a woman in a hair net,  
a junkie pedaling by. For once

an ocean breeze slips though the factories  
that loom around this neighborhood.  
Mom watches the playground's poplar trees

shimmy and inhales the air  
that smells just as she remembers, warm  
and spiced with salt and balsam.

### Hoodoos Will Appear Where You Are Standing

The ground feels solid as my own rib cage pressing into the rail that keeps me from the drop into Bryce Canyon. An information panel describes what will be here in the future—more sandstone spires as the canyon widens. I thought hoodoo meant the power to charm or curse, but here it testifies to what lasts.

From my mother's core,  
though memory crumbles, her  
laugh is strong and clear