

## Michoacan

Who's river, tailing into an island of moss y el coyote? Loitered origin. Whiplash. Who's hungered cedar and tracked pollutant? Yo regar sus entornos sin permiso. Splintered vine (milk) and half empty pot (I bathe here). I embrace you, big mysterious fossil: scent of roses and Guadalupe. Milkshake graffiti. I wipe my feet on an unnamed map, regionally extinct. I speak you into memory: but already I am failing: english. My biggest cage is el idioma I was tricked into obeying. So many thorned mispronunciations. I rebirth myself bastard without language. Unburden me. Half-fish half-woman. In the backyard my grandfather keeps a parrot: yellow feathers clawed into his left hand. At night the air gets so cold. My grandmother teaches me how to shoot a gun. I am seven years old. An aguacate falls from the pinata onto my Tio Gaby's head. I buy a quartz ring at la plaza for four pesos. I show it off to Maruchan, a boy down the street with the affectionate nickname for his big, rosy cheeks. He is the first boy to blush at me, although I crush on the boy who sells the fruit and los pepinos but he goes with my cousin, Meli. Their relationship and my enamored shyness doesn't last long, because eventually we have to go back to America. In my school journal I write, "We went to la plaza, I don't think you know what that is. There are trees trimmed into squares and lots of confetti on the ground and the air smells like chocolate and smoke. It is not a fairytale and I am not lying!" Mojarra/oracle: do you miss me too? She asks me how long my hair has gotten, so bright under the sun, como un chica de la playa. But with hips like a seashell. Mojarra/oracle: bless me under your cathedral steps, save me from what I desire.

My beautiful white horse: you aren't very soft and I regret you. Your tenacious snarl, your silver eyelashes. Your pink underbelly. The hoof which cracks my back. I suckle on the thick, rich marrow. I ride you as if my life depended on it. In my sleep I tie you to a tree and run away, abandoned. Toward a fistful of flowers I run to lay in the arms of salvation. A tongue that reminds me of the ocean: brine. To undress is to demand a surrender of my conquered history. A mouth receives me warmly as I am colored light brown colonized-flesh. I toss my saddle out toward the mountain and suck on an oyster of home.