scents of my mother
   for nana, hu guaiya hao

drugstore lotion
cheap imported cigarettes
grief
flores màyu¹
a pot of white rice
anger
instant coffee
bleach
a 6-pack of bud, “the premier beer of the mariana islands since 1949”
boxed curry sauce mix
lipstick, in deep red
yellowed vinegar pickled mango love
boonie² peppers
trash burning out back
anxiety
eyeliner shavings
fuetsan yan mamuti³
five maternity wards
blood-milk
typhoon season
the space between the equator and the tropic of cancer

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1 Chamoru for plumeria.
2 U.S. English slang for boondocks, the sticks, or the middle of nowhere. Since the WWII militarization of the Mariana Islands by the United States, the word boonie has been ironically adopted by Chamoru peoples to describe our island jungles. As we have a strong, genealogical sense of place, and historical and contemporary relationships with our neighboring Indigenous Pacific Islander peoples, Chamorus don’t literally believe that our lands are “the middle of nowhere”—an otherwise deeply racist, colonial worldview that European and U.S. American imperial powers expressed about Oceania and her islands.
3 Chamoru for strength and pained muscles.