

## When My Brother Visits We Play Hide and Seek

with Santiago's VCR. The black ribbon of *Como Agua Para Chocolate* still treadmilling inside. If the new kid

is working the pawnshop, we'll have enough to split Pioneer Chicken, fryer grease baptizing our knuckles.

Next week we'll lift a fistful of tío's dirt weed—his rocking chair cure for foggy eyes. Then, mom's grocery bag

stash of laundromat quarters. Gravity stretched it thin enough to see the tidy stacks of guillotined fathers.

Us, less scared of La Jura, more scared of her—only one we knew could square up and make even

God flinch. My brother and me practiced hiding so much, we eventually lost each other.

Him paddling down any river that'd end at the tributary below a tourniquet. I learned

you can lose yourself in someone else's losing. It took a dozen years of feeling

around in the dark for me to find a family photo with everyone in frame. When I saw it

my eyes fogged too. In my periphery I saw my mom, firing pearls from a slingshot.

One by one. She's got a target in mind but won't say who. I see them pass through

the sky like a needle through denim. I'm still waiting for them to land.