1985

The Arc of a Curve

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3261
The Arc of a Curve

“Opté por el silencio, imitando a la noche y a mi padre.”

—G. Cabrera Infante

I was the one with the blue scarf, the one with the night rolled up and cupped in his hands, the one who saw it all. Even the wind crumbled. I told no one. I said nothing until tonight, N.

Tonight when the rain was everything the way the delicate bones of your hands become everything at times, even in thought. I've learned to trust my thoughts. You can tell them anything because they don't tell anyone, they don't even sigh.

I can change my blue scarf to green. It's easy: the brain is still learning to ache like a heart, but its progress is pathetic. This is what I think about when I think about nothing. This is what I think about when the rain is everything.

N, listen to my small confessions. This afternoon I dreamed that I dreamed that the telephone was ringing. Someone waited at the other end while I screamed. Someone waited and said nothing. But I know what they were thinking: something about a letter that never comes, something about the futility of distances or of the thought of distances. N, the rain is still everything.
It comes down, feels the house like a hand. Your hands would run down my cheeks, fall from my face like rain. This is memory. This pure silence. You learn the most from those you hardly know: back in the brief days of that other life, my father taught me that silence is the longest word.

RIVERS, HORSES AND FIREWOOD

Three cold streams come down from the mountains. They meet at the bottom and the river begins, running west after the sun, running straight. When the road was built the old bridges were abandoned and began to fall and ride the current like firewood on a gentle horse.

My father sold firewood across the river when he was ten. He walked by his horse, running his hands up and down the reins and thinking of his mother, how she stayed home, running her hands up and down her rosary as if taking her faith by the reins, selling her soul to God like firewood.

FABLE

It wasn't that long ago. Hurricanes with the names of women would cross the island like packs of wildebeest. Hurricanes with the names of our dead: