

CutBank

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Courtesy

Debra Hines

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Courtesy

The dirty exhausting town,
the hundred flies on the cutting block—
we can't absolve anything here.
It's apparent in photographs,
as I catch you handing a mistrustful boy
a coin. That boy
will follow us home.

This afternoon, I take my place
beside the old beggar
at the corner of Calle de Jesus—
the one who plagues me
and wins her little war.
My hand darkens in shadow.
I am about to mumble
whatever she mumbles
to see if coins will come winged
from the white hands of strangers.

Now I've awakened
and I can't go back.
All that is left
of evening is dinner,
and some poor woman's hand
extended through the window,
her fingertips nearly
touching our table.