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Recycled

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Recycled

Lorna Van Gilst

Oh, Daliana, so old for your ten years—
I saw you flinch—
 I flinched too—
When your mother took the bowl of tepid milk
 that I had left on the table
 after fishing out the soggy corn flakes
 from their warm, milky pool.
Your mother shook a few more flakes of corn
 into the bowl
 and handed it to you.
“Mama,” you wanted to say,
 “this milk is used—
 left over from another breakfast.”
But you only flinched and ate
 What your mother placed before you,
For though her name is “Esperanza”
 —which means “hope”—
She has only you to hope through,
You, whose father died in violence,
You who wants to write stories
 for newspapers
 in a land where every day you hear
 the word “corupción.”
You, who lives with your granny and too many cousins,
 sleeping at night four or five to a room,
 by day, tending the baby, serving the soup
 while your mother looks for work.
You drink the warm milk
 that I leave in the bowl
Because your mother is bone-weary,
 but you still have hope
 and you must grow strong.

Daliana, child—when were you ever a child?