

CARIDAD MORO

PERSPECTIVE

My mother does not like escalators
 moving ladders she calls them
 and in an attempt to enlighten me
 she speaks of *Abuela Panchita*
 who took a tumble in *El Encanto*
 the only store in Havana
 to have one at the time.

Folklore or no
 I think
 her downright dumb—

because we are in Miami
 because I am thirteen
 because should the escalator break down
 I can walk my way to rescue.

I prey on her pride
 shame her into a ride
 mutter *Chicken*
 beneath my breath.

Years later,
 in the first apartment
 I can barely afford
 she offers to decorate
 her favorite thing to do
 so I find her offer tainted—

because there is no sacrifice
 because without sacrifice, it's merely fun
 because I think it should cost her
 something to help me.

Still, we pick out colors,
 cover my nicotine stained walls
 with Miami Vice Aqua and Pepto Pink
 to the beat of Donna Summer.

When it comes time for edges
 taller than either of us
 she climbs each rung
 and I realize how little
 fear has to do with reason—

because she is still afraid of heights
 because she is trembling and terrified
 because she is painting
 saying *For you, mija, for you.*