**Eternal**

Maira Rodriguez

 Before the sunrise

 mamá lets down her braid.

 It unfurls, falls

 silently past her hip.

 She brushes from top

 to bottom, the bamboo

 brush with stiff white

 bristles, clings, smooths

 the natural wavelets

 of her midnight river.

 It leaves her pelo

 hermoso, shiny like

 a sandpaper polished

 stone. I come upon the first

 sunrays of the day in her.

 Most mornings after

 breakfast I follow her

 outside, help her fill

 the wheelbarrow with wood,

 milk the goats and cows,

 sneak eggs from gallinas.

 Satisfied with our tesoros

 I run my thumbs over thick

 eggshells, marvel at the

 freckled toffee skin,

 always hard to crack.

 And when it’s time to

 head out, and I promise

 to be back soon, we hug.

 Above us two doves drift to

 and away from each other.

 I hold her closer, tighter,

 watch our shadows

 merge, eternal, on the rich

 brown dirt beneath our feet.