**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.