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Half dreaming, I see Michelle bend
over a bowl, early light sifting

between the curtains—steamed white rice,
broccoli, carrots, green peas, and a week-old
turkey leg—after having worked all night

at Denny's with no lunch break. I imagine she's too tired
to eat but too hungry to sleep. A helicopter hums

outside, searching the nearby school grounds
for someone, echoing the clatter of Michelle's fork
against the bowl. And I think of my friend

Saúl, how a circle formed real quick around him
and Eduardo, the bully who shoved me

at the bus stop two blocks away from
school—only that time I didn't take it, I stood,
walked up to his huge nose, said qué pedo

pinche Tucán and he laughed and slapped me on the cheek, and Saúl
walked over, shoved his shoulder hard, and a circle formed

real quick around them. I carried his
backpack after the fight. The other night they pulled a body
from our neighbor's apartment. The only sign
of his death was the awful stench we could smell
when we took the dogs out for a walk. Once he called

Michelle a bitch, I called him something
back, and he shoved my shoulder hard. I'm not strong. I don't work

out like Saúl did. But the stench of our neighbor's corpse
lingered for days after that, and we

could smell it every time we got home. And later I went over

to the bathroom and found Michelle bending
over, scrubbing the bathtub with bleach and wearing nothing
but a pink thong. I kissed her shoulders as hard

as I could, ran my hands over her
back, her belly, her thighs, her lips, through her

hair, bit her neck, rubbed my fingers under the pink
thong until she came leaning against my chest, then we went to bed

to finish. Michelle wants to buy an RV and a piece of land
to live in, with a little yard for the dogs to dig holes and run

around in. And she wants to go
to the Harry Potter World in Florida
and to London and the Opera House
in Sydney and spend more time renovating
the furniture that she drags in
from the trash like the desk she sanded
and painted red and black

with bat silhouettes on the drawers—but I keep
thinking about the night Saúl and I and our friend Alex

were walking down the avenue
 after getting drunk because Saúl got his girlfriend
pregnant and then Saúl throws up standing in the middle

of the street and he throws up because
 of the beers but maybe also because of the baby,

and seeing him throw up makes me throw up, and
then Alex throws up too, so we're all just standing there

throwing up on the street. And when we got to Saúl's,
his father beat him for getting home drunk, and he beat
him later too when he found out about the baby, badly enough

that Saúl missed a couple of days from school—but that night we are
lying awake in Saúl's bedroom, and we turn over and we see

Alex asleep on his back with his arms crossed on his chest and his
head carefully cradled on the pillow, and Saúl says that Alex mastered

that sleeping technique so that his spiked hairdo doesn't get messed
up while he sleeps, and we just start laughing so hard
we can't breathe, and we both keep trying to shush each other but neither
of us can stop laughing.

Tomorrow I'll wash

the stack of dishes that's been piling up
on the sink. And I'll sweep the dead
leaves in our patio and clean the dog shit.
And maybe we can go to the movies because Michelle
has been wanting to go even though we don't have
money and our car needs so much shit
fixed. And afterwards we can buy strawberry
scones and iced Thai tea and we'll sit
and talk about my friend Saúl
and Alex's sleeping technique and about going
to London and buying an RV and a piece
of land with a little yard for the dogs
to run around and dig holes in.