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Don't Look Now I Might Be Mexican

By José Angel Araguz
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Don't Look Now I Might Be Mexican

That was the title of the book in my dream. I was on the cover, black hair slicked back into grooves, like a record with sunlight needling off. The Mexican flag lay across my chest in a slant, slung over my shoulder like I had won a contest. I had on a blue blazer, khaki slacks, and yellow shoes. I hear the

Colombian girl I work with say: *You look dressed to ask for a loan. Ready to get that taco truck?* No, I am here to tell people about eighteen-wheelers, families as cargo, caught, stunned to have to go back. *¿Que te crees?* I want to tell about La Llorona by the side of a river so distraught from losing her child she became a myth. *Why the banana shoes then?* Not banana: my feet are the color between stop and go. *Is that why you're not smiling?* I look back at the photo, see my head hanging over the green, white, and red. Is it shame or defeat that radiates like sunlight at my feet? I could be La Malinche. I could be my father with a son he threw into the ocean. I could be my mother with a son of postcards and phone calls. Did I say it right or are those shoes made of straw, am I to be heretic in this crusade of borders and kin? *Your ghosts are women crying over dead children? Isn't that everyone?* I tell her there is no river deep enough to slake the thirst of a land too dry for neighbors. She laughs. *It's raining, it's always raining. When rain hits a river, all it does is disappear.*