

THE MOUTH WILL TASTE ITS OWN FEARS

In the kitchen the curtains imitate
wind. The blue lights of the police

car twist out of the dark outside.
They're coming for you, Isabel.

They heard about the glow of your skin,
the picture of the hands holding

mandarins, how you denied
for years that the hands were yours,

that the mandarins were real, that any
of it ever happened. It happened,

Isabel. There's a man
with a hole in his heart to prove it.

DREAM-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB

You have a hunger for the Latin boys, always standing at the edge
of a trend. You softshoe your way into the heart of anyone with
a pair of dark eyes and a good radio. There goes the neighborhood,
you said, watching the blonds move in with their red cars, their
subtle lines, the keys to their old houses still in their pockets.
Another migration of pale boys with new wives like birds out of
season. All desire has a price and everything costs more at this
end of town. Even the building on 27th Avenue (the one that came
out of nowhere, remember?) is beginning to look dated, not quite
as tall as it seemed in the beginning, not quite as important in
the midst of things. The Latin boys are listening to country
music in their cars, a sign of something—age, the times, fear of
being noticed. Remember, when you were a child you'd shut your
eyes to disappear. It worked then, it might work now for these

loud boys gone soft. Time passes like a trend. Everything goes soft, then turns to water and the water evaporates. Rain is just a memory, a collection of old fashions, words that meant something once and now mean something else or nothing at all. It all comes together, comes down out of nothing (like the building, remember?) and you have to call it something so you might as well call it rain. Call it hunger. Say you must return to the days of Cuban heels, the joke about the awkward kid whose favorite color was plaid. Call it impossible. Yes, I said country music. The Latin boys are growing out of their cars like roots out of the ground. Blame it on the music. Hunger is not enough. Desire is not enough. If you have to ask the price . . . So you heard that one before. It's not fear of being noticed. There's a row of abandoned cars on 8th Street. Try to explain *that*, girl. The pale boys are moving out, going back to their old houses. We should've expected this when we learned that they never threw away the keys. Too late, girl. Their wives no longer resemble the snapshot in the wallet or the 5x7 in the office. So the boys take the snapshots and the keys and leave the wives behind. If hunger is weakness, girl, you're down for the count. You go from car to abandoned car, turning up the music, the same song all along the street. Just by walking from here to 57th Avenue you can learn the history of the American automobile. You can sleep in a different car each night. This can go on for years. Or forever. Call it your meal ticket. If hunger is weakness. . . Hang up your gloves, girl. Call it a day. When the pale boys move out, the Latin boys grow pale. The neighborhood will never be the same.