

Adiós, Miami

MARCI CALABRETTA CANCIO-BELLO

I have never knuckled a car along this road without counting the palm trees spaced so evenly they must have cost this city something. The sun is bright as a coin flashing in a chlorine sky. My eyes slide along these wires crackling with the century's last landlines, parallel to pavement. Every wall here is white, every intersection a tangle of lights. The sun peers into the windows of a hospital that wrests mortality's gorgon gaze from the mirror. Here is where BTS often spilled from my car as I ground to a scarlet pause. Here, too, a man once rolled down his window, elbowed his torso over the line between us to ask where I'm from as I rolled up my window and double-checked the locks, eyes forward, the sun glaring in the space between us. An engine clears its throat. Here is that guitar store my love keeps promising to take me so I can fix the music I carry home on my back every night. Here lies the café with the cheapest croquetas and cigarettes. There the lime loops of another smoothie shop. Once, I wielded my car down this route emptied by quarantine and cloudburst, flinching at a popped tire and wondering if I would make it home before somebody else died. The sun peers in at the corner of every viral video, and I can't look away. These years make of me an old, bruised woman. Overhead spirals the ramp to the expressway. And here is the entrance to the mall, full of cheesecake and hangers shrugging into shirts hemmed overseas, a parking lot glinting in the too-bright sun with chrome names whose tires lick clean these roads that show us where we're going instead.

