

Longing

Yaccaira Salvatierra

Everyone thought Dolores had flung her heart
over a California cliff to drown
the way she spat at her husband, who like a pigeon
cooing around spokes and nets,
would tenderly call her name,
Lola, Lolita, ¿por qué no me quieres?

But one summer, when Dolores' daughter
began to learn how to love, she asked
Dolores if she had ever propped the windows
of her heart open wide enough
for Dolores' husband to climb in, or to hear
pigeons call to one another.

Dolores never longed for the honeying of English
between tongue and palate.
She never liked her husband's attempts
to speak to her in English: *Lola,*
why don't you love me? It was not because
his English would get caught amid

his teeth after having met in factory-filled
Los Angeles—buildings looming
over trees, looming over hissing cars,
over her husband's calls,
Lolita, let yourself be loved. Déjate querer, Lolita.
That summer, she offered her daughter

a riddle: If your heart first gets caught
among the dry tumbling of weeds
between Tijuana and San Ysidro, and then
on an agave with finger-length thorns,
Santa Ana winds forcing you to abandon it,
how would you hear a pigeon's call?