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I can tell you all my heartbreak and grief
in beautiful words stemming from roots I've grown used to
Can spill all the love and joy I've felt
through synonyms and capsizing testaments
But my brain ties itself and my tongue tangles
when I try telling you in the language I was born from
The words I was slathered in the first moments of my life
The only language I use to speak to my mother
When I speak with my mother, my best friend,
le hablo así, le hablo con amor con ternura,
con cariño that I've harvested
from the times I can't find the words I want to say to her
When the flow of our conversations are interrupted
by the ghosts of a language I once knew
I can only follow the phantom
back to sweet stubborn lessons learnt
in quiet cold computer rooms at age 6
Tucked behind the library, hidden from the rest of the school
Where English as my second language grew,
wildly, spread like ivy across me
But ivy is possessive and as I spent 7 hours
of my day sowing its seeds
The land my mother tilled for her piece had become mine
Now when my tongue tries running across these fields
she trips over holes she saw our mother dig
She once asked me what language I thought in
I said English, and at that second my heart ruptured
seeing the disillusion in her eyes
She smiled sadly said "es okay mi amor
solo tenía curiosidad pero que bueno que manejas los dos lenguajes tan bien"
Como se me quebró el corazón de no poder decirle
que he estado recorriendo telenovelas
en miedo de que se me está olvidando como escribir quiere y querer
I don't know who I'd be without one or the other
But the thought of losing my only communication
with my family terrifies me, it's fear
that looms over me with every word I write