

**Love letter to Ciudad de México.**

by JSA Lowe

We're never foreign until we go away. The great dragon gazes into his glacial lake, unfamiliar to himself most mornings now. Sculptural cheekbones, that new curve to the broken nose. Whiskered. A leaving wisdom.

I don't hear from them, or when I do they're tired. Six children between the three and I curl my tail around the mountain and cry sizzling tears. Will you read me now? Will you let me see?

There's a rentboy photographed in deep red, arms soft, throat tendoned. I don't know who he means to leave next, only that the architect in love with him will have to stand it. When I thought I would die in my sleep, I held it cupped between my hands like an egg, hedgehog, her message she gave me. But this is supposed to be about yours. Your ink, your calligraphy. Arterial spray across rice paper. This is your year. It means you have to be more careful.

In the Marais, I could take you to the falafel window. In Mulegé, a concrete zócalo polished into glass where they swing-dance late into night, reflected like gulls on glossy sand. I bought turquoise spackleware, an acrylic blanket, found scorpion parts glowing under my cot. One night I got sick halfway through my salad but it was always worth it to leave home.

I missed you. It was midwinter. We hadn't met yet, my shoulders dropped as soon as we cross at Tecate. Cold rain in the dark streets. The sweetflower scent of maize.