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Tia Was Taken by One of Trujillo's Men // When I Asked My Bestfriend How to Say 'Wrist' in Spanish

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LIDABEL A. AVILA

Tia Was Taken by One of Trujillo's Men

si Jefe.

I will swallow my words
and choke on ones like
libertad.

si Jefe.

I will leave behind my children
to satisfy your need
for my knees
to be grounded
en sal.

si Jefe.

I will let you use my blood as wine,
the fear in my eyes as pornography,
and my weak limbs as branches to
amarrar.

si Jefe.

*Me dejaré perder
en campos de caña
para que mi república
no tenga que hacerlo.*

When I Asked My Best Friend How to Say “Wrist” in Spanish

I know it's *muñeca*.
that it's the same word for doll,
porcelain or plastic.
but when I open my mouth
pieces of a broken face fall out;
clinking-crashing noises
hitting unsteady ground.

so I cave in
to the mercy
of my friend who says
the word my mind couldn't
find a place for anymore:
a discontinued figurine long forgotten.

I wonder
if memory would do the same

to words like

amor

canción

estrellas

huesos.

If I lose these
I will be at a loss
for breath. My lungs
will collapse
like flamenco figures made of clay,
turned over to flames after being
shattered or neglected.