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Buelita Lupe

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Heather G. James
'Buelita Lupe

A woman with hands,
puffed as chilled, risen
bread dough

humming a tune
from her days
on the stage

when the swell
of her breasts
held a note

that would cover
six mariachis
in gold braided suits

a face like cake batter
fallen, as she handcranks
the wringer

bleach scented rains
from sheets then hung
to arch and snap back

teasing and whiter
than virgins, church lace,
fish battered before frying

she favors the arm
with the bruise blue
as agave flowers

bloomed by a fist
she's lived with
fifty years

in the mottled maize
kitchen she serves
grand and great-grandkids

tortillas bearing her
fingerprints, like fossils
of lard and flour

sacred as infant
yawns, buttered
and warm