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Must be Fire

By Nico Brito-Harp

my mother always held me in the palm of her hands
like water cascading down the mountain to reach its destination,
to reach the spring, to reach the levee,
to reach the purity you could only find in reflections.

but I've been gone forever now,
and, instead of palm, all I feel is cracks,
cracks between my mother's tired fingers,
and I don't know how much longer I can fill this container.

*“sana, sana, colita de rana, si no sanas hoy,
sanarás mañana,”*

words whispered to children to make the fear go down easier,
but I've been adult forever now
and the frogs still don't make sense.

at least they didn't,
until 12:03 a.m. hit and the frogs gave their greetings:
ribbit, ribbit, ribbit, stop...

I don't know what's louder –
the silence or the release,
but I've been aware forever now
and I still can't make the pieces fit
as nicely as I need them to.

if my mother is water, then my father
must be fire

beautiful flames only fly at one's expense,
but I've flickered out too many times now to care
about seeing you get better.

I don't know if I mean that,
because giving in is giving up,
I've stuck around forever now
and can't let this linger any longer,

I'm still hung up on frog tails
and we're still inhaling more smoke than air,
but we can make healing a fire,

and although it blares through the night,
we can put it out tomorrow.