

Visiting Abuela's Sister and Her Five Daughters
By Adriana Estill

Sun-infused kitchen, family staccato chatter
oasis, shadowed nook, still
swarms the formica gold-flecked table. I'm
ocher saltillo tile
too slow to dance their conjugations, follow
musty air, books
the gossiped trains my tías trail
slant across shelves
after them every visit. They fling mugs
stories in English: Danielle
of cinnamon-deep coffee into the air each time
Steele, Judith Krantz, Stephen
they laugh. They laugh
King. Words in English steal
as one, see me in the doorway, clamor, vente,
across the pages
vente, sit down, we'll prepare you a dish of fruit,
promise of juicy
how about a mango: impaled on a trident
gossip, date-stained
fork, skin peeled, ready to be slurped, nibbled,
finger tips leaving traces
my chin sticky with nectar. The tías giggle, swarm,
of my travels.
fizz; eyes darting, their fingers busy with tasks.

Waves of Dolor: A Deconstructed Sestina
By Adriana Estill

I could have sworn my first words were in Spanish,
but mami quashed that notion, gave me grief
for altering the origins of my story. De verdad,
she said, your first words flowed in English,
and then with sweat (hers), blood (hers), dolor
(mine), I learned the tongue that gifted

me mañanas. And now I say that word
out loud: mañana. I emphasize the eñe, claim
my Spanish, switch codes with joy and sometimes,
too, dolor—for the loss of monolingual confidence.
I used to grieve how Spanish shockwaved
through my English, idioms askew, vocabulary

shaky, stories roughly told. It's true my Spanish
drags in histories of words as I doublecheck
translations. Ya mañana entenderé más, I promise.
After all, my English pours like wine, cultivated,
aged, and my Spanish ebbs, retreats, until sudden
grief demands I find palabras for my dolor.

And, yes, this poem dwells in English but dolor exceeds
what either language offers. The story of my losses
lodged in bones, my grief, stubborn, refuses
to imagine mañana free of the taste of sandpaper.
Yo ruego al español mío regalarme las palabras
necesarias, al inglés le pido lo mismo. Languages

like oceans. English crashing on my sandy shore,
a constant dull roar. The waves' crests jutting out
with Spanish: cómo te extraño; ya te contaré historias
de nuestra familia; te adoro, m'hijo. I've tried to wrap
a million mañanas around my son until he knows his grief

has twice as many ways to be languaged. Grief summons
all meaning, English in its rush towards what's
next, its hope that mañana be released of all dolores
and Spanish with its family stories ending in *colorín*

colorado. Both now anchor my grief, dolor the dew adorning
each mañana; histories a pulse in every syllable, every sun
set. English swims with Spanish twin currents crashing on.