

THE MARINA ROOM*

Nicki Avendaño

No one knows that Marina lies in the backyard, pushing up daisies. Where her birth gives laid her to rest after they found her strung up in the bare branches on that winter morning after growing tired of their conditional love and dismay for her desire of the same form. And as the four seasons change and the rain, sun, wind, and snow fall on her invisible headstone, Marina's body is embedded in the soil of the underground while her soul clings to the frame of her childhood home. And just like she wishes to feel warmth, wishes for love, wishes to be seen, and wishes to forget, what she wishes for above all else is to not have to wish for anything at all. She continues to wait for the day her bones are retrieved, then turned to dust. After that, she can be carried by the wind, released by a familiar stranger's fingertips over the ocean, returning to the sea for eternity.

So one day, if you muster enough courage to swallow the stones in your throat and turn the key, let your tires kick up the dirt on the way, and drive up to her house. However, take your time. Although she is full of sorrow, Marina still finds drops of joy in watching the girl braid her hair, let her tears fall,

and dance around in the same room she once did.
Even more, she loves to watch her love and be loved,
admiring how times have changed for the better
since she was flesh and blood. Yes, it's alright—

She doesn't mind sharing her room in the
meantime.