

Valencia

The bedsheets blue and flowered under the woven
white blanket. Purple crêpe dresses stored
in old suitcases. A green overgrown garden the rain
keeps tending. From her bed, my grandmother sees
the orange underbellies of clouds. A life of lipsticks
in varying shades of ochre. Of Chanel No. 5.
She can no longer climb the stairs
without losing her breath. There are seventeen
steps between the far end of her bed and her gilded,
framed windows. Two erect buildings past the iron bars,
brick faces in shadow. Two chaguaramos swaying, their arms malleable
windmills. If the wind blows the right way, my mother
says, you could smell the sea, the Caribbean
breakers washing up on the coast of Patanemo. The hulks
rusting in the docks no longer sail. The tricolored flag
undulates over the port.