

Lola's Dance

Her hands dance with the marshmallow keys
of the Steinway until the marble walls vibrate

with her power. Heavy hands stopping
elbows on the table, then gently spinning

rice noodles through air.

Her rings glitter

when she chimes a bell to call "the help,"
because how dare she retrieve a spoon

herself. When it rains, she throws open the
windows—
holy sky floods the slums down her mountain,

but *the rain has healing energy*, and so
she takes your arm. Together, you dance,

to radio sonata spinning
through the sitting room.

*Keep your chin up, balance
the book on your head.*

*Don't take home men from bars,
for you have more worth than that.*

Blame her for your taste in fine things,
for taking you to dinner in velcro heels,

tenderly holding your arm, talking
about herself into sundown,

drinking one glass too many
until you are embarrassed,

wishing she'd spun rice noodles
at home instead. She gives you a story

to tell when asked why you refuse to play
plastic keyboards. Chin in the air you explain:

*Because those keys won't dance
with my hands, not like Lola did with me.*

In the Philippines, we call grandma *Lola*.