

Mima's Tortillas

Taylor Baker

Like clockwork she begins,
her fingers in the bowl of flour.
Between each blink the masa forms
more water, flour, mix, repeat.

The table's legs brace each blow
as she pushes from her shoulders
and she utters Spanish slurs and curses
as she calms her heavy breathing.
She stops for a drink, and now she rolls.
The palote hits hollow
as the dough thins against the board.
Up, down, turn, repeat.

Her fingers work
the forward-back motion
opening and collapsing
against the rolling pin.
Moving to the stovetop,
her fingers dance the charred comal.
The calluses, from years of practice,
protect the tips from burning.

The flat circles bloat with heated air.
She smells for smoke
as the surfaces brown.
Flip, flip, again, repeat.

She motions at me,
sitting atop the powdered counter
amongst measuring cups and spoons.
After these years. I should know.

But when I try, she frowns,
and corrects me, again.
"Like this," she says.
"Like this," she repeats.