

Carolina Morales

The absence

Slumped beside the toilet,  
head cooled against  
the wall, I lean  
into a respite between  
hevings. Eyes close.  
A chill from the window wipes  
my face. Whine of traffic  
through morning darkness  
hums from the street below.

*drives me there—my torso  
molding exactly into the sag  
of the sofa. Tang of kitchen  
aromas kneads my stomach.  
Fingertips reach from behind,  
press my eyes shut. But  
when I peel the hands away,  
turn to see,*

my face startles itself  
in the bottom  
of the full length mirror.  
Light glares from the bathroom  
ceiling. My knee aches  
against the floor. The whiskey  
thin of my stomach coughs  
into my throat, and everything  
is the absence of you.

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*Carolina Morales's poems have appeared in Poems and  
Plays, Spoon River Poetry Review, and elsewhere. She  
lives in New Jersey.*