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Cleo

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Erin Adair-Hodges

CLEO

We'd go to Juarez to dance, black light cooing my skin electric
as if invented to love me. All my old selves mewled
in their corner cribs, nursed on dust, unready for the dawn
of such bright. I gave myself a new name, tongued it

into strangers' mouths so they'd know the right me
to miss. I lioned. Ate what my day self feared.
I was Cleo and I was not afraid of karaoke.
Cleo, no blue-mouthed virgin certain

she could worry her way into heaven.
Cleo in a leotard speaking Spanish in an Irish accent, Cleo queering
in that word's pre-verb, Cleo the gypsum dunes
and the bomb they swallow up. Funny—

I am her mother now, though I sometimes
still get her mail. I've curfewed her
but my body's made of windows, lost boys pawing
at the seams. I drink my tea and sleep so hard

it's impossible to know what she's done,
what pleasures she'll bring home to hang on my bones.
I don't know what is a memory
and what is me wanting something dark into life.