

COLITA DE RANA

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The rope tightened around her neck, and she felt her body drag over sand and sagebrush. Her legs had already gone numb from the drug they had given her, but she could still wedge the tips of her fingers under the noose. When the car stopped, her head slammed into something hard. The pain made her cry, and her face ached from the beating, but suddenly, she felt nothing in her arms. The numbness spread quickly.

They shut off the car lights and let her lie there in the dark, inhaling the fumes coming out of the tailpipes. Her tongue tasted of metal. All she could do was blink her eyes. The stars looked like the city lights, and for a moment she felt like she was hanging upside-down, all the blood rushing to her ears, making her face hot. She remembered the ride at the fair. She didn't see them until they were on top of her. For a second her eyes were seared by a sharp light and then she saw their faces, something glinted in their fists.

At first, she did not feel the blades slicing into her belly. She saw blood splashing. They were laughing. And then the pain started. She heard the tearing sound, like the time she'd had a tooth pulled at the dentist's office, something torn out by the roots, deeper than the drug, and she tried to say something, but someone hit her on the mouth again, and someone else stabbed into the bag of water and bones—that's all it is, the nurse at the factory told her, a bag of water and bones.

She could hear someone singing, a woman's voice singing, sana, sana, colita de rana, si no muere hoy, que se muera mañana. Heal, little frog's tail, heal, if you don't die today, may you die tomorrow. It sounded like her own voice.