

THE LEGENDARY LEGS OF THE RODRÍGUEZ WOMEN

Luivette Resto

Unequivocal with his observation,
a New Orleans accent and a smile
the stranger comments, “Nice stems”
quickly passing by my shoulder,
creating a small breezy respite from the stale heat.

My cheeks responded in gratitude,
with thoughts of my mother
and the legendary legs of the Rodríguez women,
mythical like Ithaca and Helen.
The genetic heirlooms
from a grandmother I never knew
as 1970s pictures framed in sunflower yellow
document my mother standing on beauty pageant stages
in stilettos with an audience of wishful suitors
and envious women.

Instinctive like writing names on wet sand
I touch the brown flesh and muscles below my knees
wonder if Carmelita ever thinks of my mom or me
when she inspects the variant blues of veins,
slips on silk stockings, dances to Tito Puente,
wades in the water we call home.