BECOMING BONITA (MY CURLS AND ME)
(an excerpt)

Magda Rodriguez

2022 Summer Creative Writing Workshop Participant

I looked at the mirror, and all I saw were wet curls that would be ruffled by the breeze, increasing the volume of the hair twice-fold, eyes that should have been green like my mother's, a nose a little too big for my face, and incoming dark facial hair I need to remove with frequency. I moved my hair back behind my shoulders. Perhaps it is hard to find beauty within the self.

My curls are a constant battle as they ruin by touch. Yet they betray me as they demand others to touch them, being complimented and ruined at once.

My roommate poked her head into the bathroom as she knocked. "So…are you going to use my straightener after all?"

I shook my head. "I took too long in the shower. So, I don't have enough time to do that."

She leaned against the doorway. "You know, we could borrow another straightener and get it done faster between us."

I looked at her reflection. Her straight light brown hair framed her face perfectly. "No, it is fine. I would get sweaty from all the hot air and feel gross."

She broke into a smile, and her bright blue eyes sparkled. "You sure?" She played with a curl of mine.

I took a step to grab my makeup bag, causing her to drop my curl.

"Elena, you would look so pretty with straight hair though."

I stared at us both and took a deep breath. "I get that a lot, but my sister says I look too different when I do."

"Hmm...well you would look different." She fixed her hair as she looked at her reflection. "But that isn't always a bad thing."

I tried to smile at her and continued as I put toner on my face. I know she didn't mean it the way it had come across. "It just wouldn't feel like me."