

UNO
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after Laura Kasischke

Because some words are the same
in any country, your snorkel guide, Eduardo,
laughs when you whisper, *Eres muy sexy*.

Stalled on the boat, the sea an aquarium
beneath its glass bottom, you picture
yourself splayed across his bed while

he connects your moles like constellations,
peels your sunburn like a mango.
Cuántos novios tienes? he asks.

How many boyfriends do you have?
Diez, you joke, before telling him one, *uno*,
and how lifeless honesty is—you who slip

him your email believing he won't write,
believing it was only a courtesy for him to ask.
Some things are left tragically to the imagination:

How the surf must holler him awake
each morning; how neoprene hugs and puckers
his body as he skirts the reefs

long after you've returned to the sadness
of Boston and seasons, piles of snow
darkening under the turquoise skies

that bathe him. Your loneliness
is nothing new—the girls
all stream his way, big-hearted,

moonbeam skin, their blond hair draped
down gauze dresses, longing
to drown some sorrow from his boat

as they idle above the angelfish.
He'll point out a spotted eagle ray
and they'll squeal the way you squealed,

each voice a bright oceanfront villa
to wake in. You think of him later
on the plane as you soar above and away

from the island, grieving, thinking
you missed your chance, thinking *what if*
he was the one—

the secret you've waited for,
the secret you'd die with, still a good woman,
wild, but not too wild; the secret

that would flicker every so often like a bracelet
catching the light, the one replayed
in waiting rooms and buses,

any in-between moment
when you needed reminding that your life
had not been plain: that in Mexico

you followed a man to his room and watched
how wordlessly he stripped himself
from his suit, draping it across the balcony to dry

before turning to you.