

Mother hangs an assortment of *cuco* monsters on your earlobes.

She knows it's easy to learn fear by ear, because the brain is its neighbor, and all gossip is a kind of music coursing through the valleys of grey nervous tissue.

Your bicycle runs in circles on your patio, a patch of desert surrounded by a brick wall. Your bicycle is never allowed out—it's too young, too seductive, and like a wild sponge, it would hog all the sunlight for itself. Mother tells you that your bicycle would inevitably whistle, and everyone would interpret the tune as *look at me, look at my varnished thighs gleaming like soft honey on steak*.

You feel bad for your bicycle. It's alone in its peculiar loneliness and doomed to never be ridden on outside, though it's grabbed and squeezed until copper coins drop from its belly again and again, clinking inside the infinite hole of your ears.

Sometimes, you catch Mother closing only one eye at how you still chew the blue cud of a summer day, when your bicycle was free—the elongated shadow of your sister's fingers leaving
the rear of your bicycle, letting it sprint, crash down an endless road
of black stars.