Autobiography of My Hungers
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xóchitl

She was my cat, a stray calico that gave birth on my bed on the night I took her in. I gave the four kittens away as soon as they stopped their suckling, my poor Xóchitl nearly sucked dry. She didn’t look for them once they were gone, and I knew she was my kind, unsentimental about moving on. To ensure that she didn’t go through the ordeal again, I had her spayed. OVH—an ovariohysterectomy—the humane amputation of her reproductive system. She didn’t seem to notice a difference and went about her day, licking her shaved belly until the stitches got absorbed by her fat. The scar, if there was to be one, would remain hidden when her fur grew back.

I envied her then, keeping her wound invisible. I would always be more explicit: my scar shiny on the forehead, my trembling lip when the phone rang and my boyfriend’s little voice inside screwed two words into my brain: It’s over.

Once I left my cat for a week, and so did the negligent catsitter, and Xóchitl never forgave me for her dehydration, for letting the litter box grow into a mound of lumpy shit. And once I fainted in the living room—an episode of hypoglycemia because, alone in this country, I had very little money to feed myself. Xóchitl stood over my face and waited, I was sure of it, for me to die so that she could eat me. I reached
over to make her purr into my hands and this comforted me. I dragged myself off the floor. I didn’t want to fault her for her instinct to survive. The thought of eating my companion had crossed my mind as well.