My brother’s white rabbit ran free, its pulsing body fickle and erratic as it scurried in the backyard while my brother mixed cement. I stood next to the Great Dane, shooing flies off its face, wondering why the dog let the pests have their way.

Animals had always been my brother’s weakness. He took my Xóchitl because he knew I wasn’t kind to it the way people should be—never leaving pets alone for longer than a day, never throwing a shoe at them when arriving home with heat rash.

“Are you going to eat it?” I asked, pointing at the rabbit. He paused his shoveling and wiped the sweat off his brow. “Nah,” he said. “It’s fine the way it is.”

And in the instant that we zeroed in on the topic, the rabbit hopped in front of the dog, which reacted immediately and locked its jaw around the white fur. The rabbit’s red eyes faded away.

I laughed, finding humor in the rabbit’s reversal of fortune. Just as I had imagined it as food, it becomes it! I wanted to share this moment of levity with my brother, but I noticed his tears as he went over to pull the slab of skin away from the dog. He tapped the Great Dane’s head in reprimand and
then returned to his task. “I don’t want the cement to dry,” he declared, his back to me as he plunged the shovel into the gray slush.