

Regina Ernst

Vuelta

I jump in through the back of the Bosque bus, holding the edges of my dress down with one hand and gripping the metal bar with the other. The bus's momentum swings me into a seat by a window. The plastic is broken and pinches my thigh.

"Vuelta," I shout to the driver, so he'll take me around.

The sun is a bully, pressing through the smudged glass windows, making me sweat behind my exposed knees, in the crease of my left elbow.

It's kite season. Hundreds of kites fly casually overhead. There are at least as many children running in every direction, voices screaming and laughing. If I look up to the blue, for a moment, the world becomes silent like the wind. The kites seem unattached to people, drifting gently, tapping the edges of other kites carelessly, then gliding on.

The bus jerks forward.

In Mercado de Bazurto, three serene cow heads rest at the center of their pools of blood in a line on the pavement. No bodies. The smells of rotting fish, urine and garbage hang heavy here. A bleached pigeon sits under the shade of an old truck, broken wing outstretched. Orange and blue lines in the distance paint sky and sea.

The bus makes a sharp turn out of the mercado, and la brisa swings in through the few open windows and everyone twists their heads to catch it for those few seconds, to feel the sensation of chill, to dry the sweat that has been gathering, to start fresh.

The bus slows to let a family of pigs cross la avenida, and the

land looks so wildly lush, so green, so perfect. The only way to stop my eyes from taking it all in is to close them.

Regina Ernst graduated with her MFA in Fiction from UNLV. She lives in Philadelphia. Her flash fiction can be found in *Nailed Magazine*, *all the sins*, *Indicia*, and *Queen Mob's Teahouse*. She tweets [@reginamernst](https://twitter.com/reginamernst).