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Skill

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Skill

by Carlos Rodriguez

The girl delivering
on her paper route
has taken on the
shape of a woman,
but it's too soon.

Earlier in the day,
outside her house,
she waited for the truck to toss
the paper bundles onto the lawn.
Positioned between the stacks
of piled and unbound papers,
she pulled the printed day
down onto her lap
forcing it to crease,
forcing it to fold.

The day blackens her hands.

This is how women work -

seated, the back curved,
imagine a woman pressing masa;

the legs folded underneath,
imagine pinning fabric on a hem;

the arms close to the sides,
imagine casting clothes into a river to clean them;

the hands not far from the waist,
imagine repeating a weave on a loom;
the body drawn into itself,
imagine the embrace needed to nurse.

This paper girl believes she's older,
believes the weight on her back
and breasts seems womanly,
but she doesn't understand
the papers in her sacks,
the days thrown for others.

