

Noche de las Ranas

by Dominic Preziosi

They made it last as long as they could, then longer for the sake of it, for the mosquito netting and rain-soaked thatch, for the fights and for the silences that had followed, and after they finished he stared up at the spreading dampness and said, “Maybe it’ll cool things down at least.”

She touched her thumb to the sweat between her breasts. “You think?”

The wick glowed in its glass, painted Lady of Guadalupe conferring blessings on the lost and flickering moths.

“I don’t know.”

That’s when they heard it.

“Birds?” she asked.

“Not at midnight.”

He pushed aside the netting, pulled on his shorts, trained the flashlight on the dripping courtyard. Rivers ran off the wide *pinanona* leaves, surged through fissures in the crumbling wall.

“Well?” she called.

They were barely larger than the ten-peso coins they gave the driver of the *colectivo*, but their boasting drowned the storm. “Come see,” he called back, watching them leap through the rain.

Later, back home, she would tell friends: “There were so many.”

“A plague,” he would add.

The story’s details soon slipped their grasp—hundreds of frogs became thousands, Wednesday night became Thursday night—but they kept its heart in their hands, willing it to beat a little longer every time they whispered to each other: Remember?