

Dormilona

by Sarah Long

These fern-like weeds grow along the roads. “Watch this,” you say, bending down over a plant. The touch of your fingertip sets it recoiling, stunned—a fun, jungle trick you picked up somewhere along your way.

The plant's name translates to *sleepyhead*, or *late riser*, as if there's whimsy in self-preservation, the instinctual drive to shut out body heat.

“We mean you no harm, little plant,” I want to say. And I find myself wanting to tell you the same, all the time, but you're quicker.

“If you get the chance to live in New York,” you tell me, “you should do it.” But you don't live in New York. You and I could go there together, but we're not talking about that. You're urging me to move there with someone else, the boy you can't hear about, the boy I recoil against if it gets too hot.

The further I am, the less you have to fold in on yourself. I find it strange, my leaves always opening, always waiting for the harmless touch.

