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La Catrina

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LA CATRINA
Alberto Gutierrez





ARMINA

Bridget N. Scott-Shupe

AS MANDATED, ARMINA'S MORNING PASSED without speaking. She was too afraid one of the foremen would sneak up behind her, as they often did, and send her home without pay for some imagined transgression. Some of the women, however, peering around and over their shoulders to ensure their secrecy, would start up short and quiet conversations Armina could sometimes understand. They griped about wanting to talk, sing, and smoke while working and often asked each other for old remedies to help cure their sick children and husbands, who always seemed to be ill from something or another. They talked about the homes they had left behind, looking for something better, and the family that had stayed and were supporting them in spirit from afar, the inhuman conditions of their tenements and jobs, and a lack of food and water that was widespread across all immigrant nationalities. Complaints of mending torn socks and the like after having already spent the day sewing were common, and many joked about dreading having to cook when they went home. Even the children choked out confessions of missing their mothers.