

My Brother at 3 A.M.

by Natalie Diaz

He sat cross-legged, weeping on the steps
when Mom unlocked and opened the front door.

O God, he said. O God.

He wants to kill me, Mom.

When Mom unlocked and opened the front door
at 3 a.m., she was in her nightgown, Dad was asleep.

He wants to kill me, he told her,

looking over his shoulder.

3 a.m. and in her nightgown, Dad asleep,
What's going on? she asked. Who wants to kill you?

He looked over his shoulder.

The devil does. Look at him, over there.

She asked, *What are you on? Who wants to kill you?*
The sky wasn't black or blue but the green of a dying night.

The devil, look at him, over there.

He pointed to the corner house.

The sky wasn't black or blue but the dying green of night.
Stars had closed their eyes or sheathed their knives.

My brother pointed to the corner house.

His lips flickered with sores.

Stars had closed their eyes or sheathed their knives.
O God, I can see the tail, he said. O God, look.

Mom winced at the sores on his lips.

It's sticking out from behind the house.

O God, see the tail, he said. Look at the goddamned tail.
He sat cross-legged, weeping on the front steps.

Mom finally saw it, a hellish vision, my brother.

O God, O God, she said.