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¹⁰⁻¹⁻²⁰⁰² Cada Regalo Perfecto

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Cada Regalo Perfecto Mexico, 2002

– Deja Earley

Watching the orphans scramble on their playground of half-buried tires, I wish our

pencils, paper, sharpeners, chalkboards, glue were instead

bubbles, candy, matchbox cars, silly string, ice cream. I turn my purse inside out.

The Altoids to a boy who sketches me on his new chalkboard, looking up again and again to get the nose right—a Sesame Street oval.

My lipgloss to a slouching girl with an unpronounceable name who loves geography and sweeps the cloistered walkways every day.

The crackers to a sweaty boy I snatch at group picture time to be my friend for the count of three.

My frozen water bottle to those we watch through the back window of the bus who jump and wave in the dust and trash and shattered flowerpots next to the Cristus in the dry fountain, His robe magenta, His arms open, a plump bird perched in his hand.