

# songs my parents listened to when they were still in love.

Wanda Deglane

i.  
with every passing day, I find myself listening more and more to songs my parents danced to in our kitchen, the ones they'd play on our road trips. on the way to school one morning, my mother points out the gin blossoms song she first heard in the airport when she had just landed in phoenix. how she still remembers her sweaty hands, fingers laced in between my father's, terrified she'd be sent back to peru. but she'd heard the song many times before in lima. she had never understood the words, but in the moment they seemed to be saying, *you're right where you need to be. you'll be so happy here.*

ii.  
when my parents fell out of love, my father played the same guarana song over and over, everywhere he went. I hadn't heard it in years, but the soft guitar startup had been threaded through my brain all this time. *I hope you find glory. I hope a cloud of your memory erases me.* I never noticed how hopeless and aching the lyrics were, in spite of the playful tune. just like I hadn't noticed when my mother started sleeping in my brother's empty bed until I found the balled up tissues left on his bedspread like tiny white flags. my father stares out the windshield. so typical of him, he refuses to acknowledge the grief settling heavy in the air. he just sits in it, alone.



Guarana

“Echame a Mí la Culpa”

El Efecto Guaraná

01/2000

Sony Music

iii.

I carry the song around my neck now.  
somedays I think it might be the only  
thing tying my head to the rest of my  
body. maybe if I listen to it enough times  
I might piece together my father's  
wordless apologies, my mother's bruised  
bitterness. I might come upon the place  
my parents inhabited when they first  
decided marrying would be a good idea.  
the two singers plead, again and again  
in my ear, *lay the blame on me for whatever  
happens. cover your back with my pain.*

iv.

my mother finds a new kitchen to dance  
in, and paints its walls periwinkle. she  
wears makeup every day, cuts her bangs,  
carries her head higher than I've ever seen  
it. she refuses to make eye contact with  
mirrors. at night, the song drifts into her  
new bedroom through the air vents,  
through the windows. it asks her to save  
herself any way she knows how.  
*tell anyone who asks, I never loved you.*  
she howls until morning.