

COMO UNA VELA



The Caribbean licks at my back like the flame of a candle—
here, *se fue la luz* is a lullaby that I hear on blue nights
when Brooklyn sleeps and diaspora wakes—

it's a ritual: combing out the curls until they become cloud,
removing each rollo like a vela—
this one for tía Linda, that one for tía Chila
the rolling a bendición:

*que te vaya bien
que siempre tengas dinero
que tus hijos alcancen sus sueños
que tu alcances tus sueños*

my hand is a current
rolling hair over barrel
a wave of plastic and velcro
calling to an island I remember in dreams

to go out like this is to go out with the ancestors.
to go out with the ancestors is to go out like a candle—
yellow-blue, glowing, rolling out to any shore.