

THE NEW TROPIC

February 15, 2023 – Miami, Florida

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Poetry from [The Writer's Room](#)

“Whenever I tell non-Miamians where I’m from, the reaction rarely varies — ‘Miami! Caliente!’” writes Caridad Moro-Gronlier, curator of our monthly feature of work by poet alumni of The Betsy Writer’s Room. “I’ve realized that ‘caliente’ means more than misguided enthusiasm regarding the ardency of my ancestry, but rather, it’s meant as an endorsement — of the weather, people, food, music, and spirit of Miami. In Silvia Curbelo’s gorgeous poem ‘Tropics,’ she provides a sensory portrait of our balmy city, an imagistic meditation on the heat here and how it permeates every interaction. Caliente, indeed!”

From [Silvia Curbelo](#), “The afternoon I arrived at The Betsy, I went out to buy a few things. As Cuban immigrants, Miami Beach had been our entry point into the U.S. in 1967. We lived there for a year. It’s a very different city now, the old streets unrecognizable with new buildings, jam-packed with tourists and traffic. Memory is at its most powerful when it comes through the senses. Standing on Ocean Drive in the noon heat, I realized how the quality of the light, the weight of the air on my face, the very music of the place were still very much as I remembered. Armed with a jug of water and a bottle of wine, I went back to the Writer’s Room and I wrote this poem.”

Tropics

By Silvia Curbello

Summer’s own backyard,
its long goodbye, trees heavy
with birds, no wind and
the temperature rising.
Heat like grief in the body,
the animal taste of it, metal
and salt, the air in free fall.
Thick clouds in the distance
ticking like piano notes
and random music everywhere,
a secret language in the dirt,
love or sex, some reckless
kind of beauty in abundance
like that underwater dream
I once had when we were young
and the silence was new
and the river owned us.