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SADIQA DE MEIJER

WOMEN DO THIS EVERY DAY

At the park I look for Levita,
because our work is the same—
swaying wide-legged over foraging toddlers,
we avert bruises, discourage the consumption
of found objects, interpret primordial languages,
serve fruit from hastily filled containers,
and trade a few stories and questions, so I know
that it's not the same work,
because the toddler is her employer’s,
and evenings she goes to a small apartment, crammed with roommates
who are also working thousands of kilometers from home,
and she tells me of a mountain farm, and shrimp paste, and her wish
for dental work, and we laugh, having the same missing molar,
and I tell her about camping, and I never think to ask if she has children,
because I still underestimate the violence,
but they are six and three she says one morning,
early in the fall when we are waving wasps from the cut apples,
and the youngest doesn't remember her, and then she takes my dismay
for condemnation, and says furiously they are not like children here,
the older one can cook, the little one can sweep,
and my girl wants to nurse, and I’m apologizing senselessly
for everything I ever haven’t done.