

“Abuelita Says Goodbye” by Javier Zamora

Javercito, you're leaving me tomorrow
when our tortilla-and-milk breaths will whisper
te amo. When I'll pray the sun won't devour
your northbound steps. I'm giving you
this conch swallowed with this delta's
waves and the sound of absorbing sand.

Hold it to your ear. I'm tired
of my children leaving. My love for you
shatters windows with birds. Javercito,
let your shadow return, alone,
or with sons, but soon. Call me Mamá,
not Abuelita. All my children

learned the names of seasons
from songs. Tonight, leaves fall.
There's no autumn here. When you mist
into tomorrow's dawns, at the shore
of somewhere, listen to this conch.
Don't lose me.