Razor

Esteban Rodríguez

The sink needed no description, and yet, I couldn’t let the mirror refuse its role, couldn’t watch it not reflect the hum of faucet water, the broken clumps of soap, the scattered Q-tips, brushes, toothbrushes, flattened tubes of toothpaste, spent rolls of toilet paper, bottles of nail polish, Listerine, Lysol, deodorant, hair spray, gel, an uncapped can of Barbasol beside my father’s hand, and the manner in which my father would stand like a shirtless Santa, cream lathered across his jaw. He’d tilt his head upwards, press his crotch and stretch-marked gut against the counter, then lean over, flick his plastic razor, erasing the mustache and five o’ clock shadow.
I inherited as stubble and whiskers, as a semblance of a neck beard that would prompt him to claim — thanks to my mother’s side of the family — that my blood had more than just a hint of indio. As I’d stand behind him, wondering if my lack of hair had skipped a generation — or if I should believe that even though my complexion was lighter than his, the Indian in me was still present — I’d thrust myself back into fragments of a barbershop: a red, swivel chair where my locks were snipped off, and where the barber layered heavy cream across my neck, pressed his blade above my lips, and scraped my cheeks till the hairlessness again revealed who I wasn’t sure I should have been.