In her new apartment my mother wears lipstick
the color of raspberries.
The record player gently siphons 60’s blues,
she is unapologetic when she sings off-key,
or smokes inside to ease the tension of new sheets.
She’s smiling, and it’s clumsy,
conscious of the gap between her front teeth,
but still, it’s honest.
She bridges a blue deck of cards forming,
a kaleidoscope of numbers and patterns.
Her beauty distracts, though she doesn’t know.
In my mind, she shuffles again,
each number counting the times she wished she were fearless.