The Reason We Are Here
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I woke up after a surgery
And my mother was crying
I clutched the stuffed dalmatian the nurse handed to me
The same one I held on the plane ride from Lima

Todo estará bien
She would tell me
Todo estará bien? like she had asked my doctor

A man spoke through the phone
He’d capture my mother’s words
But never her tone

I remember the doctor’s expression well
Because it hardly changed
Nothing compared to the animation in my mother’s face

I am her orgullo
She would always say
Her biggest source of pride
Eres la razon por qué estamos aquí

I’ve tried to live up to her words
And give meaning to everything she had to give up

I’d be like our family doctor
The first stranger my mother learned to trust

El salvo tu vida

She was convinced he was the one who saved my life

But years later her head started to hurt,
as I learned about the human brain

Her vision was blurry
An ambulance was too expensive
And she won’t be able to drive

As a student studying medicine,
I thought about my differential
The one for an immigrant mother who lost her health insurance

Blood pressure was in the 200s
The voice of my professor when he talks about prevention
Drowned out my mother’s as she explained what she thinks the doctor said

_No lo entiendo_

I also couldn’t understand

Why can’t I do more for my mother?

And for the mother who I met at the free clinic

The one who asked me if I was going to tell anyone

That her family was undocumented

I remember the sentence I wrote in my personal statement,

“I’d be like our family doctor”

Sounds hollow now