

NIKOLAI GARCIA

marigolds

Nikolai Garcia

“He’s there in case I want it all”
—Nirvava

“Marigold is just a dirty shade/of yellow”
—Amaud Jamaul Johnson

Mounds of marigolds lifted from the trunk of a car. We tiptoe around the dead, to my father’s gravestone. A sibling, who didn’t help pay for flowers, wants to leave right away. But, my sister—dad’s only daughter—takes her time. She places one flower on his gravestone for every year that she’s lived without a father.

Walking around the cemetery, I meet a man who tells me about his brother, how he hated this country. But, he visited once, got sick, died—and is buried here.

My father worked every day of his life; worked hard—the lives of five children depended on him. He saved money where he could; enough to build a house back in his birth town in Mexico. His intentions to go back, buried with him.

On the ride home, I look at all the flower shops along the way. I wonder if this is the life my father wanted for me. I wonder if all we have to look forward to are marigolds.