## Ashtray

An ashtray, which is lined with coins sits at my windowsill. I treat it as if it belongs to a museum, like an artifact from Aztec civilization; like this signifies North America's first sign of a currency; but these are Mexican coins, newly expired.

The Ashtray fakes off a culture that I don't have. I can imagine them in the real world as poor peasant money, authentic and beautiful. The dirty metallic coin clenched in a Hispanic hand, the scent of sweat, soil, and brass comprise a culture that I have long since abandoned.

The man with the beads of sweat lining his face from the heat and humidity, his deep red skin feeling the days wages, rattles the change in his pocket that he imagines to be small bits of gold.

He sits at the counter and waits as coins are lifted from his pocket. A cerveza is bought and drank down so fast that it almost pours down his face; the streaks of liquid shine against the midday sun.

Being deemed to old for use, the coins are cleaned, polished, and waxed. These coins are gently lined against an artificial metallic base to offer me, a meaning as extinct as the coins themselves.

The ashtray is what results but, I don't smoke anymore than I speak Spanish. I'll keep it there, Reminding me as I think to myself why the hell I learned French.

-Abel Contreras