BELINDA CELINA GARCIA
HE CALLED ME FAT
My little sister came from school
with crestfallen cheeks
and droopy eyes.
No gummy giggles, no cookie cuddles,
no sprinkled stories;
nothing but bewildered hesitation.

After an hour
I lifted her to her bed.
She was as light as her empty smile.
When she finally spoke, her words poured; and I was not prepared.

Among her six-year-old
broken syllables
I pieced the words
*He-called-me-fat*
and sunk in her sobs.

*He called me fat*
acidly ran down my throat,
*He called me fat*
clenched my lungs,

*He called me fat*

plucked my heartstrings.

But it wasn’t the comment
or the words; it was the sound.

Her voice echoed a resounding
familiarity that demanded instant comfort;
so I fed her sweet compliments.

I fed her flattery treats.

She smiled through her red eyes,
but my candied compliments
wouldn’t last.

I knew because my mother fed me
those same sweets when I clung to her.