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M. Soledad Caballero

You Have to Leave Me Twice

She said it as if it were
a casual thing. Split the ashes,
one for the velatorio here, one for
the family mausoleum. Be sure
the bones are dust enough
to fit in a tin can so they do not
give you a hard time at security.
This is the great divide, mitad
y mitad. Entiendes? Me repartes.
This is how you bury your dead.
There will always be two places.
Siempre hay dos. The immigrant
always carries twin shadows. Siempre
esta la sombra. You cannot choose
North, South, English, Spanish.
You can only split the sorrow.
No hay medio, entiendes. The body
has life, but the dead, they have
little weight but sadness. Asi es,
mija, asi es. You have to travel to live.
You have to travel to die.
Me tienes que dejar dos veces.
You have to leave me twice.
El alma dividida en dos. One soul,
two eternities. She stops.
Then she asks about the dog.

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