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The Builder
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Armando Romero

for Jaime Garcia Maffla

THE BUILDER

I must tell you how I built the world. With my mother's scissors I would cut out the strips of green and plant them: trees in a forest that bad luck could kill off with one blow. Making a waterfall was no problem, though the glistening around it was. Foil from cigarette packets flowed along for rivers, and packets themselves made mountains that I poked in with my finger, forming caves for ants. The houses had hands waving from the windows like flags. I had put moss and air plants like ink blots in the fields, and a sun in the sky that was really the living room light bulb. That was how I built a world that I could stride across or fondle by glancing at it from my room. And so I was able to conquer my trembling and cry wolf to the shepherds who were filling the land with their stick figure sheep.

Translated from the Spanish by **Alita Kelley**