My Brother

My brother lives
In the smoldering

Of our childhoods.
He runs a Laundromat and

Fixes car engines in Fresno.
He married a best friend’s

Girlfriend. She stains the shag
Of their living room

With red wine and cigarette
Ashes. My mother was

The only
Jesus we knew.

And she died every night
When the Seconal took her

To the bright place where
She had no need to close her eyes.

She lay on the couch, naked
Dreaming with her eyes open.

And my brother
He did love me.

He killed me when he saved me.
And we both died then.

Cynthia Cruz is the author of RUIN, a collection of poems published by Alice James Books. Her poems have been published in many journals including the American Poetry Review, AGNI, GRAND STREET, Boston Review, Paris Review, Colorado Review, Denver Quarterly and others. She has just completed her second collection, JUNK, a series of poems written from the point of view of homeless teenage punk kids in the 80s and is currently at work on her third collection.