How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?
Follow this and additional works at: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss2/24

This document is posted at http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss2/24 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
# Table of Contents

**Cover Art** Charles Colleran

- **Angle's Home Grown Awards**..............................................1
- **Slim's Disappearing**..............................................................2
- **The Thing Is**.................................................................4
- **My Mother's Wrinkles**.......................................................6
- **Magic**......................................................................................7
- **Long Distance Call**............................................................8
- **Your Wandering I's**...........................................................9
- **Synapse and the Sea**..........................................................10
- **Attacked from Within**......................................................11
- **Cut**......................................................................................12
- **Lightning**............................................................................13
- **On God and Lust**................................................................14
- **Fatherless Child**..................................................................15
- **Mary Fare**............................................................................16
- **Ode to Knitting**....................................................................17
- **Angellic Champions**............................................................18
- **Toronto on the Way to New Mexico**.................................20
- **Driven**..................................................................................22
- **Ex Girlfriend**.......................................................................24
- **She Waits in Hoping**.........................................................25
- **A Faded Escape**....................................................................26
- **Smoke Double Haiku**.........................................................29
- **Untitled**............................................................................29
- **Submission Guidelines**......................................................29

[http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss2/24](http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss2/24)
ANGLE'S HOME GROWN AWARDS

READERS' CHOICE
FIRST PLACE Imecca E. Rodriguez . . . Slim's Disappearing
SECOND PLACE Megan E. Herrman . . . The Thing Is
THIRD PLACE Maggie Cassella . . . My Mother's Wrinkles

ART PICKS
ART AWARD Charles Colleran
ADVISOR'S PICK Nancy Farrell

Published by Fisher Digital Publications, 2002
IMECCA E. RODRIGUEZ

SLIM’S DISAPPEARING

Slim’s disappearing.
That nigga gon smoke his life away.
Say he ain’t got no problem.
Say the problem is, everybody wan be in his business.
Says I oughta tend to my own.
Slim dating my sista, Sadie.
Sadie be my business,
Sadie got a baby on the way.
Sadie say, Slim gon slow down.
Sadie say, when the baby git here, that baby gon change things.
Sadie say, Slim jus don’t know what he wan do yet, says, soon Slim gon put down dem drugs and pick up his head.
Yeah, Sadie said, he gon be walking proud.
And everyone in this damn ghetto gon eat they words, what Sadie say.
Momma say, Sadie done lost her damn mind.
Momma say, that damn Slim he goin’ no where fast.
Momma say, Slim done gone too far to come back, and that baby gon suffer ‘cause of it.
NiNi, Slim baby sister, she say she gone be a good auntie, say she so excited.
NiNi say, she gon baby-sit for Sadie, so’s Sadie could go back to school.
Sadie say, she might not go back, cause Slim gon clean himself up, and git him a good job, says she won’t need to go back.
NiNi say, maybe you just need some mo’ time to think ‘bout it. Say, every woman should git educated.
NiNi be ackin’ like a- what you call dem- dem women big on women’s rights and stuff?
Oh, feminists, that’s how NiNi be ackin’ some time.
Momma say, she wan Sadie move back home.
Momma say, Slim ain’t never been shit, won’t never be shit!
Slim say, momma need to kiss his black ass, when Sadie be tellin’ him what Momma say ‘bout him.
Sadie say, she scared for real, when she see Slim be high.
Sadie say, she frightened Slim gon spend the formula money, so she plan to breast feed long as she can.

I say, Sadie, why don’t you leave him?

Sadie say, and do what move back wit Momma, so’s she can tell me ‘bout how I done got knocked up by a loser junkie?

Sadie say, hell no, I’ll take my chances.

And then Sadie say, Slim say he’ll knock her head off her shoulders if she try to leave him anyway.

I say, I’ll kill Slim, and do his ass a favor if he touch her.

I say, Sadie I want you to be safe, I want that baby to have things, like a healthy home.

I say, Slim gon die if that nigga don’t put down dem drugs, and he gon try and take her wit him.

Sadie say, Slim getting’ sick, say she ain’t told nobody ‘cause she don’t want us to worry.

I say, she need to pack her bags and git gone, ‘cause she gon look around one day and realize she can’t look to Slim to do nothin’.

‘Cause Slim gon disappear

Obituary say, Slim died yesterday of a overdose.

Momma say, Sadie went into labor last night.

Sadie say, she gone have to git tested for HIV.

I say, damn, I wish that nigga had a disappeared sooner.

**Advisors Pick**

Nancy Farrell
MEGAN E. HERRMAN

THE THING IS

AFTER "LONG ISLAND" BY MARVIN BELL

the thing I said, when I told you to "fuck off," I said because you infuriated me.
because you intentionally hit below the belt, and you wanted to hurt me.
you chose the most horrible thing you could think of to say.
you chose to be ugly, and reconstruct the truth.

the things you think about me are untrue. you accused me of not being able to deal with
giving up my free ride. you accused me of not being able to deal with change.
funny—
what about living at home,
to North Carolina,
to Connecticut,
to New York,
to living at home,
to living on my own,
to living with him,
to Tennessee,
to living at home all over again?

I understand how maybe that’s not enough change for someone who has been all over
upstate New York from Liverpool, to Brockport, to Rochester.
how dare you call me a, “your-whole-life-has-been-handed-to-you-on-a-silver-platter” kind
of girl. I resent you telling me that I am. that’s when I said what I said, then turned in a
rush, slammed and locked myself behind the bathroom door and started that vicious fan. the
shower ran and I sat balled up in the bottom of the tub under a stream of steaming water
because you blew out my foundation and rendered me momentarily unable to
stand.

the things they did for me, the clean sheets,
clean towels,
clean house,
dinner on the table,
roof over my head, were because they love me.
And yes they paid for dog food and vet bills,
saline solution,
textbooks,
laundry detergent,
prescription medications and psychotherapy because they work to keep me afloat.
Because they care, and they are tied up in guilt, remorse and responsibility for the fact that things went astray.

Because I didn’t make the four year plan, because tuition went toward Doctor’s bills, ECT, R wing; and now the Bursar is my responsibility.

the things you said, you had no right to say. you never saw what happened along the way. and if you truly think that my life has been a free ride; you have a lot to learn. I have no intention of being beat down in silence anymore. You see, the thing is, I’m learning all about survival, verbalization, and taking care of me. and you’re sure as hell not going to stand in my way.
MAGGIE CASSELLA

MY MOTHER’S WRINKLES

“You can’t stop them from coming mom”
She smiles and shakes her fist,
The timelines written across her face
Give me a laughing atlas.

Only I can’t make a copy of this
I must look and memorize,
What will happen when the map lines fade?
Leaving no trace of smile or eyes?

The wrinkled map will float about the world
That wraps itself around me,
A spiritual place that I can only feel
But wish that I could see.

Maybe it will wait halfway for me
Leaving trails of wrinkled lines,
And if I sit back and close my eyes
The map will appear in my mind.

Or maybe it will not wait, and I am alone
On this earth with an unguided fear,
I guess this means I must come face to face
With the aging one in the mirror.

MARK JACOBS
Alyssa Osinski

Magic

I was just a little girl when I fell in love with my daddy, a short man with a big heart. He would take me up to the Burning Bush park to swim with me and teach me how to dive. I would never go off the high dive but daddy told me if I tried it, he'd buy me an ice cream cone. I thought I was going to drown but it was worth it; nothing ever tasted as good as that chocolate ice cream cone.

Daddy was a generous man. He would buy me toys for no reason and take me to Lakeside Farms to get candy. He would buy me the biggest pumpkin on the block at Halloween time and he always had a more creative costume than I did. The year that I was a princess with a sparkly wand and a tiara, my dad was the Boogar Man. Ever since I can remember, he would tell me that the boogar man snuck into grocery stores at night and put boogars on all the candy and gumballs in the 25-cent machines. This intrigued me and I never understood the big smirk on his face when I carefully looked in the machines and claimed to have spotted some boogars.

Anyway, along with his Boogar Man costume with dried silicon all over his clothes and a mask with a big green boogar between his nose and lip, he mixed some Nickelodeon Gak with water to make a really drippy green slime. He "slimed" everyone handing out candy with "boogars." For some reason, he ended up getting more candy than I did that year.

Daddy definitely had a lot of tricks up his sleeve. In fact, he was a magician. He pulled quarters out of my ear, and did rope tricks and card tricks. All his secrets were hidden in his big, dusty old magic book that I was forbidden to even think about opening. After all, he had made a pact with the International Brotherhood of Magicians that he would not reveal to anyone the contents of the book.

Daddy was really an amazing man.... until I turned twelve.

Dad was such a jerk! I couldn't believe my parents were so uncool and I no longer had the freedom I felt I needed. He would yell at me over petty little things like not cleaning the litter box or forgetting to get the mail. He would ground me for rolling my eyes and walking away from him. Living with dad was turning into pure hell. Who'd have known this supposed God would answer my plea when I wished him dead?

I was fifteen. It was the first day after a long winter that the weather was warm enough to wear short-sleeves. It was the first day the motorcycles were back on the road. After getting his inspected, dad was on the way home from the shop when the bike started to shake and he lost control. No one knows what was wrong with the bike; the investigators couldn't prove anything. All we know is that he hit the guardrail. He hit the ground, snapped his neck and instantly died. Since there was a big fire, no one even got to say goodbye to his body.

Something this drastic had never happened to me. Someone I had loved and hated for so long was never going to kick a soccerball with me again. He would never take me to Lakeside Farms and pick out the biggest pumpkin. But at the same time, he would never hit me and call me a slut, or dump the cat's litter box on my floor when I didn't clean it.

Sure, there are ups and downs to every death, but I knew right away that I shouldn't have wished my daddy dead. For the rest of my life, I would regret it. I would spend endless days searching through his drawers, his personal memories, and his office for familiar smells and glimpses of the man I had once loved so much. I would struggle to let the good memories take over the bad. I would stop and look at myself and see the same qualities of my daddy and laugh and cry at the same time. I would rub the dust off his magic book and wonder what the contents were, but never ever dare open it.
MARY E. HOLMES

LONG DISTANCE CALL

Operator: "Information, city and listing?"
Ms. Wishful Thinking: "Heaven"

By now she’s got all of Heaven in her graces, the Arch Angels visit her often, and I’m sure she’s had the family to tea.

She’s up there with her Dad, they’re swappin’ stories, she’s tellin’ him about the day when he’ll meet me.

I’m sure she’s decorating, making clouds even more soft, I’m venturing to guess all of it is more and nothing feels like less.

And I pray that for now she can’t see me.

‘Cause if she’s looking down my way, I just may seem a little gray, still not okay with not having her with me.

Little jealous of the angels and the saints. They already had it good, but now they have it great.

I used to think that void meant nothing, but now I see, It means nothing where something very important used to be.

silly me.

I have never missed anything this much before, And I doubt I will ever miss anything more.

Family Reunion

Date: Unknown
Location: Heaven’s Door
Over read,
or under analyzed?
Stuck between truth and lies.

This paranoid fear forebodes,
again the once ominous storm begins.
and drives me back to my pen.
The nipple I can't let go of,
like a smoker,
the cravings won't quit.

The addiction renders me weak,
I succumb to the winds,
and the rain torments my head,
but my mind is safe in the bottle.

Like the note inside the bottle,
I safely float upon the sea,
waiting for the beach of sun,
and someone to uncork my hidden words...
I
Drunk with thoughts
I put my third sheet
To the wind, sienna sands
Far behind, the ponderance
Of sandpipers remains—
Funny, they are
Scrambling bird legs yet casual
Stalking the muscles
Left behind on the shore
And the crest flows in
Chasing upward
And I wonder if they ever tire
Of all this switching, darting
And stealing.

II
The synchronicity of pulse
And boat both, a swish a sway
I realize I've slowed
With silence, but wonder
Still, is society the object
Or the landscape? Is it possible
To place saxes with strings
While I write this overture? Of
Sodom and Gomorrah I list
Ten people worthy to be
Spared, but to no avail
Like Sisyphean labor I keep rounding
The wonder with no sure thing,
Deciding that I shall die trying.

III
After sewing the sonnet
Some metaphors unfounded
And stale, I stop
To string the sail—
The third sheet has been
Wrung sober so that I may see
Around it now, pulling
My eyes to the setting sun
On the beaches of Sarasota...
I wait
For the sapphire night,
As it sneaks down
Surrendering the day to
Me and my thoughts.

http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2003/iss2/24
Anger, Fear, Nervousness
Or sometimes just walking down the hall
Triggers it
A rifle going off in my mind
First the heat
My face turns into the shade of a bright red balloon
My body begins to get hotter and hotter
My own personal hell

Then suddenly I am gasping for air
Clutching,
Reaching
Begging for something to help me
But nothing can be done

Then the pain begins
A punch to the heart
Whose torture just won't go away
Lingering, Loitering
Getting no better or no worse
Just a constant pain
A Constant Curse

If I'm lucky I'm sitting down for all of this
When I stand I fall
And then there aren't memories

Of how it all happened
Just me lying on cold linoleum
With pain in my chest
With pain in my head

I'm left wondering
Why won't you just leave me be?
PEGGY STERLING

CUT

Here you are, back again
Wanting another chance,
Another audition with
The same audience.

A chance to play in that old scene,
The one where you’re cast as
The leading role in my life.
The Star. You want top billing.

You say your performance
is better this time; you didn’t have your act
together. It’s been too many times;
you have rehearsed those lines.

Your script is old and overdone
I’m not interested in repeated reruns
Your words have never proven
to be true, only true fiction

There were too many cameo appearances
Fade ins, Fade outs, always some new stunt
You are the master of cliffhangers,
A boy, depicting himself as a man

I have seen this drama so frequently,
I know the outcome. I won’t be starring
As leading lady, so here’s your cue,

There will be no upcoming sequel
Insurmountable feelings pass through
Like violent stormy rages
Full of electrical current and ready
To strike within a moment's notice.
Being the storm and attracted
To you, the water
I am drawn to you like a magnet.
Lightning never strikes the same spot twice
As many would like to believe
But I believe it to be different
Because it happened between you and me.
With eyes angelically looking outward
Into the world of the unknown
Am I brave enough to venture into the world
And prove who I can be
Or will I just lifelessly stand
In the corner and watch the world pass me by?
Bravery I choose animatedly
Only to know the consequences of the other—
To lose it all
Lightning strikes only once
But I watched it strike twice.
JULIE WAGNER

ON GOD AND LUST

The richest garden
Lies within itself
And its spaces inside the race
Where the naked man's arms
Embrace woman in
The vast green early morning
While the orchard lay yawning
In lingering sheets of mist
Like a humble transient,
A spirit accompanying the
Slightness of dawn waking,
Both mindful and understanding
Of humankind in its desire
Of wanting to see but
Only suffering sounds—
The croaks of sadness, of being
Nature's oldest foe
For loving
A shallow glass reflection
In the hot springs
That once ran deep until
It boiled over and
Spilled out madness
For emptiness and vanity and skin
On skin—
Having lain together
Now let us drink
To the fruitless laughter
To the shallow spring
To the maker
Who gave us empty glasses
To fill with reflections
Of beauty that we now covet
And come to know as shame.

JODI ROWNLAND
ALLAIR REID

FATHERLESS CHILD
AFTER “LONG ISLAND” BY MARVIN BELL

The things I remembered, I remembered because they were real: real fun, real happy, and real sad.
Because I did not know my father and because he was never there, because he left my mother to take care of me, because he was too afraid.
Because he never told me that he loved me and how much he wished he could have been there.

The things I believed, didn’t really make things better;
I wanted to believe that I hated my father for not wanting me;
I wanted to believe that one day he’d tell me that he really did care.
Because he never once told me that he was proud of me, or never once held me tight, while he sang me a lullaby.

The things I believed, I believed because I was forced to grow up too soon, because my mother had to work to support her children, because I had to be the mother to my brother and sister while she was gone, because I was her eldest child.

The things I knew left me bruised, because I knew I was a bastard child, because I had no father, because I knew he did not care if I lived today or died tomorrow. Because I knew he did not want me, because I knew he would never be there.
Because I knew one day I’ll see him again, but I really did not know where.

NANCY FARRELL

15
DEE HOGAN

MARY FARE

Roses, lilacs, daisies, tulips
A wall of scents for
A Coronation like no other
I, gowned in pink,
One of four five-year-olds
Chosen to honor
Mother Mary in May

Lovely child in floor length silk
A crinoline slip boasts a
Bell-shaped skirt
Bouqueted hands confirm
Haloed flowers in my hair

What approval, what acceptance
That Father chose me
Adorned me
Adored me
In his recognition of
Absolute innocence,
Magic on my face
The breath of my heart
Humming ‘you are cherished’
An angel in
Blossoms and faith
A Paradise Princess
Immortalized by a
Photographer’s magic
Flash of self-esteem
A light of reflected virtue
Beauty and truth
Still at my fingertips
Fifty years later.
ALEXIS SPECK

ODE TO KNITTING

An addiction,
The needles in and out,
Of one another,
Connected by a small piece of yarn.

Accepted by society,
Approved by the family,
A hobby, a tradition,
Not like the one hidden in the back of the cabinet.

The small clicks,
Made as metal hits,
Quiet, almost unnoticeable,
Opposite of the noise of glass shattering,
Bottles breaking.

Something to share,
Not be ashamed of,
To keep our hands and minds busy,
And some day knit our way out.

As the yarn weaves together,
We don’t speak,
Of nights before,
Only of scarves, sweaters and hats
That are to be made.
JOHN KARBOWSKI

ANGELIC CHAMPIONS

It is late October and the leaves aren’t the only things falling.
Baseball teams are being eliminated until there are only two remaining.
These two teams representing the National and American League,
Face off in a seven game battle with the winner taking all,
The winner being the baseball champions of the world.

The American League Champion comes out of the West
Represented by a 25 Man Roster and a 24” Rally Monkey.
The Angels in the outfield consist of Anderson, Salmon, and Erstad;
Accompanied by infielders named Spiezio and Glaus, batting in the meat of the lineup.
This team is pumped and ready to bring the Anaheim Angels the World Series.

The National League is also represented by a team from the West.
In the newly built Pacific Bell Stadium in beautiful San Francisco,
Barry Bonds has played 17 seasons and never reached a World Series.
Kent, Santiago, and Aurilia will try to help him, so they can reach the ultimate goal.
They are hoping that they’ll finally be champions of the baseball world.

Game 1 is set and ready to roll with an outstanding pitching match-up,
Jarrod Washburn for the Angels and Jason Schmidt for the Giants.
Troy Glaus goes deep two times in this first game both off Jason Schmidt,
But it won’t be enough because Barry can smell a championship and hits a blast,
Along with Reggie Sanders’ solo shot, the Giants take Game One with a 4-3 Win.

Game 2 is the next day, October 20th, still at Edison Field in Anaheim,
And this time it’s Kevin Appier for the home field Angels, versus the Giants’ Russ Ortiz.
Anderson, Fullmer, and Speizio all pitch in helping the Angels jump out to 5-0 lead,
But the Giants respond with homeruns from Sanders and Bell to make it 5-4 in the 2nd.
Back and forth the teams will go, a total of 28 hits and 21 runs, no decent pitching present,
But the Angels come through, with help from the Rally Monkey, to win and tie the series.

Game 3 takes us to San Francisco where both teams are grasping for the upper hand.
On the mound we see Livan Hernandez for the Giants and Ramon Ortiz for the Angel,
But today would be the day for the Angels as they capitalize on some “Giant” mistakes.
They take an early 8-1 lead but homeruns by Aurilia and Bonds help to spark the Giants.
However, the Rally Monkey has come in full force and the Angels win this game 10-4.

Game 4 with the series 2-1 in the Angels favor, the Giants hoping to change the outcome.
Angels send rookie John Lackey to the mound against the Giants’ Kirk Rueter.
The “Glaus” slipper fits again for the Angels as he hits a homerun to give them a 3-0 lead.
The Giants never give up and storm back to tie this game in the 5th. We move to the 8th and David Bell hits an RBI single lifting the Giants to tie the series.

Game 5 will be the last game in the series played in San Francisco and the fans are ready. The pitching match-up is a rematch of game one, Washburn versus Schmidt. Washburn must be nervous, giving up 3 runs in the first and 3 more in the 3rd. The Angels key players, Glaus and Salmon came alive to cut the Giants lead in half, But it’s definitely not enough as the Giants come alive pouring in runs to romp 16-4.

Game 6 arrives and it’s back in Anaheim, the Angels in a must-win situation. Kevin Appier tries to save the day for the Angels and Russ Ortiz attempts to win it all. Veteran Shawon Dunston helps the Giants jump out on top 3-0 with a homerun; Bonds adds to that with another homerun, but the Angels just won’t give up. The Rally Monkey awakens, and the Angels score 6 runs in the 7th and 8th forcing game 7.

Game 7: The final game in a tremendous series; the World Championship down to the wire. It'll be rookie John Lackey versus 1997 World Series MVP, Livan Hernandez for the Giants. The Giants score first in the second inning with an RBI single from Reggie Sanders. The Angels respond their next at bat, and take the lead in the third with a double scoring 3 runs. The Angels’ bullpen stays strong and is hoping to hold the Giants, and win the 2002 World Series.

Top of the 9th and two outs with two men on, Kenny Lofton is the last chance for the Giants. He hits the first pitch to center field and Darin Erstad runs underneath it and waits for it to fall. It comes down in slow motion, everyone in the stadium holding their breath, waiting for it to end. It falls into his glove and the Angels team rushes the mound because they have done the unthinkable. They have defeated the Yankees, the Twins, and now the Giants, and they are the 2002 World Champs!
Jodi Rowland

Toronto on the Way to New Mexico

The center of the earth
I once heard
is somewhere near New Mexico.

I used to think
maybe Europe
until I realized
Columbus wasn’t
looking for America.

Another time,
I thought maybe
China—the great wall
barricading threat
before the scare
of Communism walked in.

At one point,
maybe Egypt,
but its asps
aren’t ancient enough—
I asked Cleopatra.

Then I thought,
maybe Jerusalem
a safe haven for religion
yet not safe, a blanket of death
suffocating in constant
Holy wars.

And even once
I thought it must be
my backyard
until I was told
the world doesn’t
revolve around me.

Then I heard
it’s somewhere near New Mexico
where the land is hot,
the air is dry,
and the border divides.

But for now,
I know it’s Toronto
where my lover’s arms
are reaching
and streets are welcoming,
a thriving life beating hope.

Toronto—where love has found
its resting place
in the center of earth.
You said you would stop by
Saturday afternoon
to pick me up
in your new car
for a stroll on
the town, so
I fix my hair
in a glittery barrette and
outline my lips
in red stain
because I know you like it.

I wait
and
wait
still not a ring
at the door.
Maybe a balding tire
went flat or
in a row of traffic is
where you sat
for an hour
or two.

Hours wasted and
I'm still waiting.
I scrub the red
shame
from my cracking
lips, for
I know there's
no hope
that you will be
here.
Mom and dad come
home soon
I can't let them
see me
they thought
I'd be out
on my big date.

I walk to the
Woodshed
with my head hanging
low
and a few bucks
in my pocket.
A forceful swing of
the door
unmasks your face
your hands rubbing
chalk on
the wooden Que.
Not even a look
in the eye
when I walk in and
take a seat on
the stool,
just the decency
of ordering me
a drink...
JEREMY KELLY

EX GIRLFRIEND

I'm gone
I'm out of your life
Isn't that what you wanted?
Better think twice
but don't second guess
For fate will decide what comes next.
I can see your face
Lay your hands on me
While we drift into endless dreams
This is where you'll find my naked soul...
Lost in memories of past
and torn dreams of the future.
Green eyes intensified all so beautiful
What was full of life is now dead
And I stand here alone—
grey and empty
What started as poetry
now becomes prose and
when I'm gone you'll
realize what you've been missing.
New loves hard to find
and I'm scared,
not knowing where to go.
People are quick to judge
If they could only see what you see
It would make things so easy...
Megan E. Herrman

She Waits in Hoping

After "The Cocktail Party (Installation)" Photograph by Sandy Skoglund

The most beautiful woman in the room is staring at the wall because she has never realized the full potential of her beauty.
She feels unapproachable, and unknowingly reflects it.
She is poised and stoic—
  like one of Degas’ ballerinas in her lemon shoes and ruffled dress.
Her espresso colored hair pulled away from her frail face
  that can’t help but reflect sadness.
She finds interest in the Sunkist orange lamp,
  unable to grant eye contact.
She is not antisocial.
  She is frightened.
She glances at other women standing close to men
  and wishes she could be them.
Wishes that she could draw that affection—
  wanting a man to stand close enough to fill
  her nostrils with the scent of clean aftershave.
She watches and waits for the faceless man in the center of the room,
  tries to fill his thoughts with the desire to come toward her.
Hoping that she can somehow will him toward her.
But she waits,
  Grows lonesome,

  and feels her mouth fill with sand.

Charles Collieran
REBECCA KALAMAS

A FADED ESCAPE

We entered the oak double doors and I asked the host for a table in back. I held Marcela’s arm and walked her to the table. I pulled out her chair and she smiled sweetly. Her black hair was twirled into a loose bun and her olive skin glowed in the candlelight. She folded her hands and rested them on the checkerboard table. The smell of the oil lamp was faint and a symphony by Mozart played softly.

“Anthony, doesn’t this remind you of our first date?”
“I remember that night. You were wearing that black dress and you…”
The waiter interrupted us, “Excuse me, are you ready to order, sir?”
We placed our orders. Before the waiter went off I called him back.
“Sir, could I also get a Bacardi on ice.” I paused. “Make that a double.”

A semi-circle bar and the pale glass windows encompassed us. A ceiling fan with tulip shaped bulbs spun over our heads. The breeze from the fan blades tossed Marcela’s hair. Marcela could easily have been in the spotlight. She was breathtaking. Her figure was perfect. Her personality was sweet and sensitive as a child’s. She had these emerald green eyes, like a cat, and they could see through you. She could see right through me.

“Anthony, what are you thinking?” Marcela broke my trance with her question.
What was I thinking? I had a flurry of thoughts running through my head. I had a lot to tell her, but I just didn’t know how I could. What were the right words to use? I knew she had to know about the incident, but I couldn’t tell her yet.
So I changed the subject, “I just was thinking about you. About the night we first met and how beautiful you looked.”
She gazed at me for a minute and then smiled. Her eyes looked down at the table for a split second then met mine and she said, “Thank you.”

I took Marcela’s hand and gave it a squeeze. I felt proud to have made her happy despite her past trauma. And now I was going to add to her problems. I had always been her support system, and now I felt like I was the one who was going to ruin her life.

Marcela, twenty-one, and her brother, sixteen, had been orphaned when their parents were killed in a car accident. I had been their only family for the past two years. Marcela was close to her brother, Carlos, and she worked two jobs to support them both. During the day, Marcela worked at Gloria’s Floral and in the evening she cleared tables at Rico’s Pub.

Marcela and Carlos were each other’s spirit. Marcela had looked out for Carlos as best she could, but had lost control over the activities he took part in. Carlos was a great kid—but had troubles. He ventured out at night to walk the streets with his friends. Drug deals had become his source of income.

He and his friends played basketball behind one of the old school buildings every now and then, but their other activities were less innocent. Sometimes Carlos used to call me up to ask me to play a game of hoops with him and his friends. I’d meet them at the court, play a few games and go back to be with Marcela. It meant a lot to her that I spent time with her brother. I was older, more experienced, and she knew I was a good influence on him since their father died. He became a brother to me. I made sure to look out for him, not only for Marcela, but because I loved them both.

But the one thing that Marcela and I disagreed about was how her brother lived
his life. Carlos’s activities with the gang were dangerous. I often told Marcela I didn’t like the fact that she was supporting him while he just ran the streets. He did not have a job to help with the rent, nor did he help Marcela out at home. But I knew she cared for him a great deal, so I tried to understand. She was responsible for supporting them both. I could see that it hurt her to be doing all of the work herself, but she endured because that was the kind of person she was. She always sacrificed herself for others.

The waiter brought us our food; I took one bite of my fettuccini and set the fork on its side. My palms sweated as I reached for Marcela’s hands.

“Marcela, I brought you here because I need to talk to you about something.” My mouth instantly became dry, my heart pounding. I had rehearsed the lines, but for some reason I lost what I wanted to say.

Marcela stared at me, waiting for me to speak. She twitched anxiously on the seat, and tapped her acrylic nail on the table.

“Anthony, what is it? You don’t have to be afraid to tell me.”

I could see that she was getting frustrated. I had never had a problem telling her anything before. I felt tears come to my eyes, then Marcela took my hand, “I love you, Anthony. Please tell me what’s on your mind. I don’t like sitting here, not knowing.” I thought I felt her hand shake, but realized it was my hand that was shaking. She just kept smiling. I had to tell her. I finally managed to push out the words.

“Marcela…I hated that your brother was in that gang. I hated the drugs, the scams, and all the trouble he got in.”

She fidgeted in her seat, patted my hand and said, “I don’t like arguing about my brother. We both know he gets in trouble sometimes. But he’s all I got left, Anthony. Don’t start on this again.”

I continued, slowly, with tears dripping into my glass, “I’m so sorry I fought with you about his lifestyle. I love Carlos just like you do. I kept telling him that the gang life was not right for him. He told me he’d get out.”

She began crying and begged me to tell her, “What happened to Carlos? You know where he is? Maybe we could just talk to him about this. Let me call his friend Mark and ask him if he’s seen him.”

I took the cell phone from Marcela’s hand. I stood up and walked over to her and she stood up next to me. She put her face in my chest and I felt her tears soak through my shirt. I ran my fingers through her hair and we left the restaurant. We sat on a painted red bench. I swallowed the lump in my throat.

“Marcela, it was his gun. A rival gang pulled up.”

“Anthony, Carlos would never carry a gun. Our parents forbid us to have them.”

“Marcela, listen to me! Carlos was trying to protect his friends from the shots fired from the guys in the car. He shot three guys and killed them. Only one of his friends was killed. Mark was the boy that was shot. It was a street war.”

“Where’s my brother? He must be hiding somewhere. Let’s go. We need to find my brother before the police do.”

“Marcela, the police already know. That’s why I brought you here to tell you before they called your place. Carlos was arrested two hours ago and he called me from jail. He wanted me to tell you about this, not the police.”

She took me by the arm and trembled. She sobbed, tracing her foot in the dirt on the sidewalk. Her mascara turned her tears black. Her green eyes looked up at the sky and she began whispering the Hail Mary.

I was at a loss of words. I was the one who put her in this emotional state, and now I had no words to get her out of it. I picked her up in my arms and kissed her
forehead. Her hand covered her face as I carried her to my car.

I jabbed the key into the ignition, and the tires squealed as I merged into traffic. Marcela stared out of the car window.

“Cel, I am hurting about Carlos, too. I tried to break the news lightly.”

“Anthony, you always want what’s best, but you always have to be right and in control.”

“I just want you to be happy. I knew this situation would be difficult for you.”

“Now all of this is on my shoulders. He is my brother, not yours. What do you suppose I do about all of this?”

“I want this to be our problem, not just yours. I’m going to be here for you, I need you to know that. Just give me a chance to take care of things.”

“I don’t need someone to take care of me. I just need your support. That’s it.”

“Well then let’s deal with this together, ok”

I took her hand, and she leaned against me. She palmed my face and her eyes studied mine.
EDWARD TORRES

SMOKE DOUBLE HAIKU

Rolling and tossing
Turning and twisting itself
Into strange phantoms
That dance and struggle
Before rolling and turning
And fading to air

PATRICIA KNAPP

UNTITLED

When babes are sleeping in the night,
creatures crawl from the mouth of Hell,
and mothers die of screaming fright;
Unto all, the Gate’s lost bell.
Nighttime wonders in dreams do cease,
of ponies and flowers that abide by thee.
Paralyzing fear, the pain is eased,
regressing through, Blessed Be!
And in the morn, when babes do wake,
angels wait on Heaven’s floor
to see the child on mum to shake;
soul’s light wings fly to Styx’s shore.
Who in life should not know
about the angels above and demons below.

LISA GUARNERE