

There were lots! And all with breath-taking bodies. So neither Del Castillo nor Richard had the nerve to get undressed. They weren't crazy, right? Not even if they had had such bodies! The only thing we did was to stay their gawking, enjoying the sights. But of course, very well wrapped up in our coats.

—translated by Harry Polkinhorn

Rosina Conde

Sonatina

More than once I've tried to commit suicide. Pilar says I do it just to blackmail her, that if I really wanted to kill myself, I would have done it by now. Pilar says it's very easy really, that the key is the jugular, or a shot in the head would do the trick. She's probably making fun of me. Pilar is crazy. She doesn't know what she's talking about. Does she think that I'm so common that I'd kill myself and make a bloody mess? I've got enough imagination to die with class. If only I knew how to play the piano! I'd spend all my time interpreting Mahler instead of plotting suicide.

What a pain being alone all day at home! But Pilar doesn't want me going out, she's afraid they'll get me again, or that I'll go with my hooker friends, as she calls them. And yeah, they are, but she doesn't have to call them that. What really makes her mad is that I could end up in bed with one of her friends; she says she'd kill me. What makes me mad is that she can go out with her friends and I have to be understanding.

Now Pilar wants to get rid of me, I can tell. She tries to get me upset and all that. It won't do her any good if I commit suicide even if she doesn't love me any more; she knows that it would make a big scandal for her and that wouldn't do her reputation any good. She's always tried to maintain a certain status and a certain image at work and socially. She says she doesn't give a damn, but I know it's not true. When I go to her office, she worries that I'll call her Momma or give her a kiss hello. Why do all men have to be alike? Because Pilar is a man, not physically, but she is like them. She walks and talks and laughs and works like a man. And she gets drunk like a man, too, and checks out women like a man.

Almost anyone can want someone, but hardly anybody knows how to love, Jose Jose says, and Pilar agrees with that. She says that I'm selfish and the only reason I love her is so that she'll take care of me. But is she the only one who could take care of me? As a matter of fact, I've had some rich admirers.

I really have. Before, I used to go out only with real preppy guys from school until I began whoring around. Pedro had an imported car that his Daddy had given him for graduation and he had this far-out friend who only invited up the girls from the strip on Insurgentes Boulevard. That's how I met Lula and she's the one who got me started turning tricks. At first it wasn't too bad. Actually it went pretty well in spite of the fact that when you first start, it can be kind of tough. You haven't got the hang of it with the guys and you spend too much time with them, I mean you don't make as much bread. Besides I still lived with my parents then and money wasn't a problem, they covered my expenses. My parents paid for school and I only had to buy my clothes . . . although sometimes not even that, because the friends I hung out with knew I liked to dress well, they would give me stuff, clothes, nylons, even shoes. Pedro, when he went to Europe, he brought me some silk stockings, and some woolen ones for winter because he knew I didn't go for polyester. About that time my parents realized I was doing tricks and kicked me out of the house. I had already met Pilar and that was when I went to live with her. She had been asking me for some time to stay at her apartment. It's just that I was putting it off on account of my folks.

The funny thing is that now they know I'm with Pilar and that it was her who got me off the street, they're a little less uptight, and we can even go and visit them. I met Pilar when I was hustling. One time I went to Los Veintes with some friends. We went because we heard there were women there who paid better than men. We met up with some transvestite friends of Lula's there and we went on to Le Baron with them. There was Pilar with a group of people we knew. I had only been doing tricks with women for a short time and was real inexperienced so I wasn't doing very well in that department. It was just that business was slow because of a gonorrhoea epidemic on Insurgentes. So there was nothing else to do but hit on the women. And besides, they paid better just to prove they could outdo men. Anyway, at the table where we sat was this really aggressive drunken dyke about forty who started to pick up on me. It kind of freaked me out because she looked kind of sadistic or something, and I think Pilar noticed it because I had the feeling I was being watched. Pilar got up and asked me to dance and the woman gets pissed off and all hell breaks loose. You can imagine what a disaster that was at "Le Baron". The woman pushed Pilar back and the guys at her table got up fast to defend her, and the ones at our table got up, too, and the rhubarb was on. To make a long story short, by the time Lula and I could get Pilar out of there, her nose was all swollen and bleeding—but let me tell you, that woman got the worst of it, because Pilar punched her eye shut; that's what one of the transvestites told us later.

At first I didn't love Pilar, actually I didn't even like her. To tell you the truth I went out with her because she slipped me some real money and took me to really fancy restaurants, and since she would leave good tips, the waiters knew her and treated her royally. They gave us the best tables and the drinks were really loaded and that's how I always ended up bombed. Later on Pilar started to monopolize me little by little, and I began to ignore the guys because, to be honest with you, she treated me much better. The guys thought I was just a whore now and they wouldn't come up with the dough so easily. But not Pilar. She mothered me, and later she even bought me clothes and shoes, because she liked to see me looking very

feminine with long painted nails, high heels, and dresses. She didn't like me to wear pants because she said that's why she wore them, and one of us wearing them was more than enough. and really, she was right because it has always been a hassle for me to make decisions. That's why even when we go to a restaurant, she decides and, after all, she knows all the menus and since she is really into food, she always knows what to choose. On the other hand, I know it really pleases her to fuss over me and make suggestions and recommend what to eat. What's more, she likes to feel like my protector and I let her. After all, that's what she is.

The first fight I had with Pilar was one time when I called her "mommy" at her office. She stood there staring at me seriously and her co-workers all smirked, because it seems they had smelled a rat, but were never sure. Besides, she had already met Meche by then. Then Pilar took me outside and told me never to come back to her office, that I only wasted her time. she told me I was a lazy bitch, that I didn't work or study or do anything to improve myself, that I only spent my time looking in the mirror and doing my nails and that she needed a woman, not a puppet. That pissed me off because, to be honest, I was the one who was doing her a favor, pretending to be her wife, locked up all the time and fixing her breakfast. So I took off for insurgentes to look for my friends who I hadn't seen for a long time because you know how Pilar detested them for being whores and never wanted us to go out with them. Anyway we partied for five days to celebrate the reunion until Pilar came and found us and dragged me back to her apartment. I say she dragged me because I was really plastered. We had a really heavy fight, so heavy that neither Lula nor the others dared interfere. We weren't knocking each other around or anything like that—just the opposite. Pilar treated me like a little girl who had run away from home. I told her that not even my parents treated me that way and I was going to leave her and I didn't want her to bother me any more because I wasn't going to get back together with her. She started to cry, you know what I mean? and then I couldn't take it any more because I never thought she could act like that. She was always so strong; so cool, so calm, always knowing the right thing to say. She

always had her act together. Because that's what I liked about her from the beginning, and I guess my parents did, too. She had her elegant life-style. And I don't mean to say she was elegant, although yes, she would wear her wool or cashmere jacket and pants and her silk or cotton blouses, so feminine, with big bows and different-colored ties. But let me tell you, her walk was anything but elegant. She always wore cowboy boots which made her look tough, tougher than any man. Because men were kind of made for boots. Still, just the same her life-style was elegant and the way she looked at the world, her apartment full of antiques and silver stuff, little lace pillows and curtains with ruffles, with mahogany furniture all nice and polished.

The first time I went to her apartment, after that fight I told you about when I took her home, I was really impressed. I never thought a woman could live alone in such a big elegant apartment. She was living in Tlatelolco in one of those buildings that became so famous after what happened in '68. You'd stand there and look out and see the Plaza.

"Bitch," she was shouting while we put the cotton soaked with vinegar in her nose; "but one of these days I'm going to run into her again and don't think I'm going to let her get away alive."

And like a mother advising her daughter, she was telling me, "Watch out for her, baby, because that witch is a real mafiosa."

Pilar is strong. As strong as a man. She's really got balls. Once we arrived at her apartment very late at night and two guys followed us into the elevator. We were going to the 12th floor. They were two guys who seemed to have come out of the woodwork and it really seemed as though they had been waiting for us. No one had spotted them in spite of the fact that we pay for security. They got in the elevator with us, one standing on the right, the other on the left with Pilar and me in the middle. Then one guy took out some brass knuckles and began to play with them, slapping them against the palm of his hand and staring us down. The other just snickered. I froze, but Pilar, who's no chicken, took out the switchblade she always carries in her belt and uses at work.

You're going to fuck us over," she said, "but at least one of you guys is gonna get slashed."
 The guy on the right pressed the elevator button, seconds later the door opened and both guys got off.

They never expect a woman to react," she told me later, emphasizing the word woman, because she always referred to herself as a woman, stressing the word to reaffirm her position as female. Pilar is an agricultural engineer and studied in the UNAM because she says it's the only university in Latin America that gives you a degree stating you are a female professional. And this pleased me at first. Though after hearing the same thing over and over again, it bothered me because I realized that when you come right down to it, she's just like the men who spend their time reassuring themselves how macho they are and that as time goes by they really have their doubts about it.

Pilar had always been proud of her virginity. In her life, she says, she hasn't been touched by a man. That's why when I led for Insurgentes she was so fucking hurt because she saw we would spend our time with nothing but guys.

"Cheat on me with whoever you like as long as it's not a man" she told me several times after. "Because when I touch you, I imagine that I'm touching them."

Just the idea of feeling the slightest touch of a macho drives her up the wall. That's why she won't get on the subway or buses, and at work she always draws a line that no one crosses, even Meche or her secretary, and the one time I tried to do she stopped me cold. That's why she detests my friends, because she says it's their fault that I became a prostitute. But she doesn't want to remember that I had started even before meeting them, and that if it wasn't for them Pilar and I never would have met. Although at times I think that would have been better because then I wouldn't be here now feeling guilty and thinking about my past and thinking about committing suicide all the time. And yes, maybe she's right and the only reason I think about it is to blackmail her, because I know she doesn't love me any more and I embarrass her.

The second time I disappeared was when a cop hauled me off on Insurgentes on the pretext that I was a prostitute, and he

was partly right, because, yes, I was, but not then. What happened was that he wanted to get some money out of me and I told him to go to hell and they began to get rough. That's when we got into a scuffle with me trying to defend myself, because they wanted to put me in the patrol car and I gave them a few slugs and scratched one guy's face. As you can imagine, I ended up all beaten up in a holding cell. At first Pilar didn't look for me, thinking I had gone out partying with my friends. But later she got desperate and she went to Insurgentes to find me, and that was when she realized I wasn't hanging out there. Then she called the Missing Persons and found I wasn't there, or in jail or the hospital or morgue or with my parents or anywhere. She must have busted her ass trying to find me, and only several days later—with the help of a few connections and some greased palms—she got me out. When they let her in, Pilar burst into tears, and I noticed how thin she had gotten while she was saying to me, "Forgive me, Sonatina."

I didn't understand exactly why she was asking me to forgive her so humble-like, and I noticed the bags under her eyes and how really freaked-out she was.

"Forgive me for thinking the worst of you," she begged. The other women were watching us a little strangely, as if they were feeling sorry for her and especially noticing my coldness and meanness. Yet, in that moment I felt no pity seeing her cry, like I did the first time. I think it even made me happy because I was already thinking about committing suicide to see if it would make her suffer. Sometimes her self-control and lack of feelings used to make me sick.

Pilar's attitude changed totally when she met Meche, a buga or straight woman, who I had introduced her to one time when we went to Balbuena to visit my parents. Meche was an economist who had grown up in the housing projects, one of the many women who went to college, thanks to the fact that UNAM costs only two hundred pesos a year. She was one of these leftists who supposedly hung around with the intellectuals from the 60's. Meche, as I told you, was straight and didn't fool around with women. But Pilar was turned on by her from the beginning, because she was a real woman; she was an activist, intelligent, career-oriented, avant-guard—and I don't

know what else. What impressed Pilar about her was that she didn't need to be a lesbian to act like a man, and this screwed me over because I was put in a very bad light. I was weak, stuck-up, selfish, intellectually inferior because I hadn't even graduated from high school, a conformist, dependent and on top of that, a whore. In short, everything that you don't want in a partner. And yet, she kept me around, waiting on her, waiting for her, without even being allowed to do anything, because she wouldn't let me. Anyway, after listening to her go on about Meche so much, I decided to finish high school. But it didn't work out. As soon as I began going to night school she made up I don't know what kind of stories about how I was off with my hooker friends or how I was fooling around with some asshole from school. She began to freak out, thinking I was going to leave her for someone else and wasn't it a coincidence that now I never went out with her anywhere? Then she began to bug me when I had to do my homework, or to come home in the middle of the morning, as if she had forgotten something, just to see if I was in bed with someone. Once I had to do a research paper with a group of students and she comes up with an invite to Concepcion on one of her business trips. She had never wanted me to go on her business trips before because she had argued that it would be too hard for me, that I wasn't used to being out in the wilds of the desert without running water and I don't know what else. But now it was okay for me to go on this rough trip with her and all these guys from work in cowboy boots and jeans. Obviously she was pissed when I said no because I had to do a research paper for school. She told me I was being a smartass who only thought about myself, and that I didn't study or work and I only wanted to stay in her pad so I could invite my buddies over and party while she was gone. Then she begins bugging me because instead of getting all dolled up, I was doing my homework. Until finally I left school to avoid any more problems. Pilar had always found excuses to make me miss class or not do my assignments, and at school they began to notice I was having problems. That's why it was better that I quit before they kicked me out and before I ended up having bigger problems with Pilar.

That time I wouldn't go to Concepcion, Pilar stayed away longer than usual and I ran out of money. But this time I didn't do any tricks. Like I don't know if it was because I was afraid or if I was embarrassed by the idea of running into some of my classmates. What I did realize was that I was totally useless. I can't type, I don't know shorthand and my grammar is rotten so I'd never make it as a secretary. I can't sew. I'd have to go to school even to be an assistant to anyone. I just don't know how to do anything. A friend from high school recommended me to his uncle to help him with a research project, doing interviews for a survey, and as usual someone else turned out to be better qualified than me. Anyway the only kind of job I could get would be as a receptionist or a factory worker but I'd be too chicken and lazy to go out looking in some strange scene. I already told you it's hard for me to make decisions! I'm used to living the good life and maybe Pilar has spoiled me on purpose. Anyway when I ran out of money I realized how dependent I am, and when she came back our roles changed. I could no longer threaten her with taking off and pretty soon I was the one demanding that she come home earlier and not leave me alone so long. A few days after she got back I went to look for her at her office so we might go to lunch with my parents and Meche was there talking with her. Frankly I was jealous. It was the first time I had felt jealous and she knew. That was my downfall for her to see me jealous. Actually I had made a few little scenes at Los Veintes or at Le Baron, but never over a straight woman, and I was always the one insisting that she defend me from the rival. But not this time. There was Meche, sitting in her office and I could feel my guts turn over with insecurity. My knees and my voice shook and Pilar looked at me, knowing she had the upper hand. Meche didn't even notice because Pilar didn't interest her. But Meche did interest Pilar, and that's what hurt. Besides you could tell they were talking about me. Later I found out through Pilar that she had complained to Meche—as if it was Meche's fault that Pilar was stuck with me! Meche told her that what she, Pilar, needed was a mate she could talk to as an equal, one on her own intellectual level, who had the same energy and a career as important as hers. This really pissed me off. I felt double-crossed, you know?

I never thought that Meche, being my friend, would talk against me. In the end Pilar isn't a liberated woman. What she's always wanted is a wife. She could never live with someone as pushy as herself because then she wouldn't have anyone to protect. And Pilar loves to protect. And she loves to entertain people, even if it's just her friends, to show that she can, as well or better than anyone.

The thing is that around that time I realized nothing had any meaning for me. All I could think about was Pilar and how she might be trying to impress Meche and seduce her. Because Pilar tried to win her over and I was acting like a little lovesick boy around her. I felt like dirt and I couldn't do anything to please her. If I went to school, I was going out partying. If I didn't go, I was lazy. If I painted my nails, I was vain, and if I didn't I was a dirty slob. Meche was perfect for her. The way she talked, her work record—because I'll have you know Pilar got her a job in the office—the way she walked and her fancy table manners. All I know is that after that time she didn't take me out anywhere because she was embarrassed by my table manners, my clothes, my vocabulary, my nails, my skin, you name it. You can imagine how I felt—worse than when I was a whore and the guys would make fun of me. I don't know if it was because then I didn't know any better and was only doing it for the hell of it, or because the guys weren't really being mean and Pilar was. Anyway, I started to feel really stupid all the time—a basket case. What really burned me was when I found out that Meche was only using her, and even if she wasn't making a big deal of something, she was flirting, trying to get certain privileges at work. When I told Pilar that, she got pissed. She thought it was jealousy on my part and that I was too stupid to understand a classy woman like Meche. What's more, Meche was worth that and any other privileges at work. So I started going out again but I didn't go partying. I went to my folks' house for five days and Pilar didn't come looking for me or anything. When I came back she met me furious, really mean. She finally convinced me that she could always come out on top. She stood there staring at me with real hate when she opened the door and told me not to come in, that she didn't want me in her house anymore. I got hysterical and started

yelling that she was a damned bossy bitch and that she had only used me while she needed me, that now she didn't need me, because she thought Meche was going to fall for her, but that she didn't realize Meche was a hypocritical straighty, who was only taking advantage of her friendship. Meche, Meche, that damned bitch!

Not another step, and she stopped me cold. I remembered my father—"If you're going to live under my roof, you're going to follow my rules." I couldn't talk, I was crying so hard and tearing my hair like in the Greek tragedies I had read in high school. Her voice sounded harsh, as if it were coming over a microphone like in those patrol cars.

"If you don't want me, I'll kill myself," I shouted desperately. "I'll throw myself off the balcony this instant, because I couldn't live without you."

"You're crazy," she told me contemptuously. "You just want to blackmail me because you're useless and you don't have anyone else to support you. If you really wanted to die, you would have killed yourself a long time ago."

I ran to the balcony. Pilar went right after me. I was still crying hysterically and tried to throw myself over. I couldn't fight against Pilar's strength and I gave in to her.

"Of course I don't love Meche," she was saying to me tenderly.

"You're the only one I love," and I didn't know whether she really meant it or was only saying it so I wouldn't throw myself over; but ever since then I have liked the idea of killing myself. Since then I haven't been able to get the idea out of my mind, and like I was saying at the beginning, I've tried it several times.

Another Jose Jose song goes, "My friend, look what love does/ it turns the lover into a hawk or a dove/ poor fool, con-man par excellence/ wanting to be a hawk / I turned into a dove." And that's what happened to me—I was a dove because I had wanted to be a hawk. And that time, the third time, I left the house to make Pilar look for me so she would realize that I hadn't gone to do tricks or wind up in the slammer. But it didn't do me any good because she didn't even notice or ask me for any explanations, and when I tried to explain, she said she didn't want to hear, that we would erase the past and we would

start all over from scratch. As if we had just been born again. At first I accepted, like an idiot, on good faith, because at the time I didn't think about the consequences. But you know, it was the worst thing that could have happened to me because then I only existed from the moment that I met her, and any thoughts I had had in the past didn't make any sense or have any value. I had to fake, or pretend, that we actually had just been born, and each time I tried to mention anything that had to do with the past, Pilar turned all sappy and would hush me and tell me that none of that mattered any more, the only thing that mattered was that we were together, each for the other, watching out for and being good to each other. Do you know what I mean? Then there was nothing left to say. Now there were no memories, good or bad, because, as she put it, we were going to start a new different life without any hard feelings. But obviously the hard feelings got worse because I kept everything inside myself, and from that moment I began to hurt in the pit of my stomach because of everything I held inside. Pilar would go to work and I was stuck at home alone, swallowing all my doubts and my memories and the feelings that were put on hold when Pilar left in the mornings. Loneliness became my muse, my macabre muse, and I would start with the idea of committing suicide just to make her suffer. Because she didn't seem to feel anything, you know? Around me she acted as if she had just met me and didn't know anything about my past. That's why I was telling you at the beginning that Pilar is crazy, totally nuts. You live with a person for a year and a half and you pretend to know nothing about her. At least when you meet someone you ask about her life. But with Pilar, nothing. Though in this case, she wouldn't let me even invent a past, because I had just been born. Not her; only me. You see. It was better that way. Because she had a spotless life that deserved to be remembered. But mine? no. My past was so murky that if you looked into it you couldn't see anything. The worst thing is that she had me believing it. I was trying to please her, to prove to her that I could behave decently or the way she thought I should.

After a few months, after I passed the test of fire, Pilar came up with the brilliant idea that what we needed so I wouldn't feel so alone and so we would be completely happy, was a kid.

But since Pilar didn't have any semen and I didn't like the idea of adopting one, the best thing for me would be to get pregnant by her brother, who was genetically the closest thing to her. That way there wouldn't be any doubt about its being hers and she wouldn't go around thinking I had cheated on her with some jerk. At first I accepted submissively and even liked the idea. But afterwards I began to have my doubts. For one thing her brother was the last guy on earth I would have picked to sleep with; and for another, it seemed like a hassle to get pregnant. Anyway, who was I to decide? Nothing turns me off quicker than having to make decisions, and I always end up doing what I'm told. So it turned out that Pilar's brother came to live with us for a while during his vacation from the university. Actually, since I didn't like him, I gave him the runaround as much as possible. It was a situation—how can I put it? Like the one in *Rosemary's Baby*, because Pilar acted just like Mia Farrow's husband, always slipping out, but at the same time watching and waiting for her brother to do his stud routine.

One night the three of us went out to dinner and we ran into Pedro in La Copa de Leche. Pilar and her brother were checking me out when I greeted him, looking for clues that he had been my lover, my friend, or what. When Pilar's brother asked me about him, I said there was nothing to tell—after all, hadn't I just been born? Obviously Pilar didn't like my answer and her brother didn't understand shit, but he did ask to see the business card Pedro had just given me.

The days passed without my showing the slightest interest in going to bed with Pilar's brother, and she began to get neurotic and lay a guilt trip on me by saying that I didn't love her and singing the same little tune about how I was just using her and I only wanted her to support me and it was time for her brother to go. Finally, three days before he left, I ended up making love with him, and later just to be sure, we kept at it the following few days because he wouldn't be able to come back again. Well, the brother left and my appetite was whetted. The first few nights I didn't miss him because I was exhausted, but after a few days I began to feel the emptiness and Pilar wasn't enough for me and I even thought of calling Pedro. Two weeks later we realized I hadn't gotten pregnant.

The weeks passed quickly and slowly at the same time. The house felt smaller every day and I began to talk to myself, asking the Plaza de las Tres Culturas to please come up and expand my space. Pilar locked me in all day because she realized the emptiness I felt after making love with her brother. I was always talking about suicide and Pilar about her frustration at my failure to have a baby, because I was useless and I had wasted so much time when her brother was here. Suddenly she would get jealous and slam the door and lock me in the apartment and go who knows where with who knows who, and come back drunk. I began to look for ways to escape while Pilar was at work and discovered that one of the living room windows led to the elevator hallway, and after Pilar said goodbye in the morning, I would escape without her knowing it. I saw Pedro for a few days until she caught me in the parking lot. I had never seen her so furious. I told her it was her fault for keeping me locked up all the time. The next day, even though she left the door open, I didn't dare go out. The fear of being found suffocated me and I began to get paranoid, as if Pilar might appear at any time and who knows what might happen. I began to fear Pilar. At first her attitudes made me laugh, but then they scared me. Her obsession with controlling me and blocking out my past made me, like I said, really afraid. Her obsession with having a child seemed sick, morbid and diabolical to me. For a moment I believed that it was all a pretense for blackmail, that Pilar hadn't really forgotten my past and was just acting that way to make me believe it myself so that she'd be able to take revenge. And what better way to do it than by subjecting me to pregnancy and to being locked up. I felt trapped. Pilar knew I couldn't live without her and was taking advantage of it. My panic increased when Pedro began to phone me to ask why I hadn't been around looking for him. Just the idea that Pilar might arrive and find me talking to him or that he might call when she was home began to torture me, and every time the phone rang, I jumped from fright. Pedro kept calling me in spite of the fact that I told him several times I wasn't interested in going out with him anymore. But you know how pigheaded men are. Like the more you say no, the more they come around. They ignore you and treat you badly

for a long time, and then when you ignore them, they insist. It's their idea of revenge. Later they seduce you and that's when they give you the whip. That's when they drop you without a word to get even, to show they're the ones calling the shots, what you can do and what you can't. In this sense Pedro and Pilar are alike. I don't know if Pedro reached the point where he figured out my relationship with Pilar, but he began to call me at all hours, asking for her, insisting on talking with her. Fortunately Pilar was getting home, like I told you, late, very late, and usually very drunk, cussing me out about the baby deal. And she would flop into bed stoned. On other occasions she would get home in a violent mood and would throw things on the floor and spit on the carpet and she even tried to hit me. My panic got worse when I began to suspect that now I actually was pregnant because then she would know about my cheating. And I didn't want any babies. I could barely stand myself and Pilar. On the other hand, if she was the one that wanted the baby, why didn't she get pregnant? That's when I definitely made up my mind to commit suicide and I swallowed a whole bottle of aspirin. But Pilar came home that day for some papers and she found me all groggy on the floor and she dragged me into the bathroom and made me throw up. It all seemed so silly to me! That only happens in the movies. Only in the movies are there such coincidences. Do you know what I mean? Why can't anything ever turn out the way I planned, I wonder. Why did I have to survive? So she would find out about my crime? Why couldn't she be seen as the bitch for a change? But then the worst happened. The suicide attempt had poisoned the fetus and three days later I started hemorrhaging and Pilar figured everything out. I don't care any more about the ruckus between her and Pedro. I just let her know it was her fault because of her macho attitude. Because I'm telling you, she is macho, and well, maybe that's why I like her—you know what masochists we women are.

To make a long story short, my relationship with Pilar didn't change much. Sometimes we even traveled together after I got out of the hospital. I don't see very much of her—less and less. Our fights go on the same. When we go out with friends, we make the same jealous scenes even though we both

know she wants to get rid of me and it's all turned into a power struggle. At times I don't know if I want to go on with her or not, but mostly I figure I stay with her because I want to screw her over, to get her for all the shit she's done to me and keeps on doing to me, because I wouldn't have anywhere to go, even, and actually, it's my home. That's the way she raised me from the beginning so I wouldn't leave. To be sure that she would have me here, like one more beautiful, shiny piece of furniture, waiting for her and serving her and undressing her when she comes home drunk late at night and putting her to bed and watching her sleep.

—translation by the Translation Workshop, fourth year students in the English department of UABC's Escuela de Humanidades, Tijuana B.C. directed by Joan Lindgren, Fulbright Border fellow.

Jorge Raúl López Hidalgo

The Knots Are Unconnected

He had been told, "It has to look easy." As simple as taking pen and paper in hand, or putting a sheet of paper into a typewriter, then waiting for the story to happen. That was what Mauricio did, silently, entangling himself in his cerebral convolutions, searching for the most hidden memories of those experiences that had left an imprint on the least accessible parts of his consciousness. "Because the beginning is in them," he told himself, accepting it as an indisputable truth.

He knows he has a blank page before him because this was his last conscious act before penetrating a universe that appeared strange to him, in spite of the fact that he thought of it as his own. He had taken the pen in his right hand, or placed his hands on the keys. His hand or his fingers will move as soon as the ideas, or his discoveries reconstituted as ideas, start flowing, energy submerged down to the level of the fissures that look like gray mountains and deep chasms.