

and possibly a friendship on this wild-goose chase. I think we both swallowed hard at exactly the same time.

It's probably gonna die, huh?

If you take it to *Califas*, it will.

He nodded and kicked at the gravel like he was kicking away something essential from himself, and I guessed that, after this, we'd never see the kind of delirious gallantry we'd come to expect of Irving. Standing in the first rays of morning, I felt sorry for the next girl he'd get mixed up with. Hell, I felt sorry for myself.

Back in the truck, he looked down on the sleeping koala in his arms like it was Mr. T all over again, and started miserably eating his own stale leftover *taquitos*. His whole face was blotched with purple while he kept mumbling, she's gonna know, some way, I'll make sure she knows. I detoured back by J.J. Armes's compound, which we were surprised to see wasn't crawling with cop cars, and slowed down long enough for Irving to jump out and leave the sack by the front gate. I dropped myself off at home and fell straight to bed. All that morning I had dreams of ladders, lions, and angry dogs.

Later in the week, I saw in the papers how Irving Childress III of El Paso had turned himself in for singlehandedly stealing a koala bear from the home of J.J. Armes, famed private detective and budding TV star, and how the suspect was expected to plead guilty to the multiple charges being brought against him. I took a sip of my mom's coffee, shook my head, and said to myself, it's not a bear, fool, it's a *marsupial*.

Octavio Solis is a playwright whose works *Se Llama Cristina*, *Cloudlands*, *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Ghosts of the River*, *Lydia*, *Gibraltar*, *The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy*, *Dreamlandia*, *El Otro*, *Santos & Santos*, and many others have been mounted throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and across the country. His drama and poetry have been published in *Arroyo Literary Review*, *The Louisville Review*, *Zyzyva*, and *Catamaran Literary Reader*. His anthology *The River Plays* is published by NoPassport Press. He is a United States Artists Fellow, and has most recently been awarded the PEN Center USA Literary Award for Drama for *Se Llama Cristina*.

JESSICA DUNNE

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Oil on Linen, 126 x 66 in



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