

water bottle. “Abandon all hope, along with cozy prevailing westerlies,” he quacked, his voice gone bone-dry nasal.

“He’s a poet and doesn’t know it,” Daisy said. They rode another few moments in silence.

“Did you call Elana?” Henry headed south toward Ventura’s main drag. The wide boulevard was uncommonly empty except for emergency vehicles.

“Texted her.”

“And?”

“There’s a problem.”

“What now?”

“She doesn’t want to go to the shelter. Some problem with Brisa. She says we should get a motel room.”

“Brisa?”

“No, Elana says she would get a hotel room.”

“On what?” He asked. Then shrugged. “We can get something at a motel for all of us. I don’t feel like sleeping on one of those cots out on a high school basketball court.” He slowed down, not sure which direction to go. “Can you check on your phone for rooms around here, maybe an Airbnb? If we can afford one.

“Elana’s angling for the Crowne Plaza overlooking the pier and the ocean,” he added. “She’s been into that place since her senior prom there. Our lives are going to hell and she wants to make it a sleepover with her friend and a holiday by the pool, fiddling with rum drinks while Rome burns.”

“Harsh, Henry. They don’t even have their bathing suits.”

“They can buy new ones. It’s only money, and think of all we’re saving by her not going back to school,” he said.

“They’re just taking time off,” said Daisy.

“Don’t count on it,” he said. “This whole thing is on account of Brisa.”

“They’re getting married.”

“Married? Married! You never said anything about that.”

“They’ve talked about it. I heard them.”

“They should elope, just not to Las Vegas.” He gripped the steering wheel tightly, as if holding on. He knew what she was going to say and regretted his wisecrack.

“What, and break Mama’s heart again?”

“Never mind,” he said. “No. I haven’t heard anything about a wedding. It’s something else.”

“You mean about ICE gestapos being after Brisa?”

He nodded. “Why would I have thought you didn’t

know? Yes. Elana called me from school when that first went down, and I looked for a lawyer. The kid got in some stupid trouble about overdue parking tickets or something and one thing led to another, even though the local cops weren’t even helping the gestapo. They’re getting into everything like cockroaches.”

“I knew all about it,” Daisy said. “Brisa’s one of those ‘dreamers,’ but never came out about it, always kept it secret where she was born.”

“Sorry, I should have clued you in,” he said. “It’s like we’re giving her sanctuary, but it’s just a big sleepover.”

Daisy put her hands flat on her skirt, palms up, then clenched her fist. “We need to do something—else, I mean. What is she going to do in the Philippines if they deport her? She’s spent all her life here! She has no relatives there. Our daughter might marry her—who knows, maybe follow her to the Philippines.”

Henry nodded and kept driving. “I want to give her baby Nina’s birth certificate, the certified copy we have in the cookie tin with some of her baby things,” he said. “If that’s okay with you . . .”

Daisy blanched and shivered. “That’s why you got the tin from the garage just now?”

“I would tell you first, of course.” He squinted and flipped the wipers on again.

“Not so sure you would have confided anything if I hadn’t seen you with the tin, Henry, but I’ll take what you said with a grain of salt.”

“Well, you’ve got me. I took it for the keepsakes. But then, just now, I thought of the birth certificate,” he said. “I’d give it to Brisa, but not tell her what to do with it—just as an option, a resource, a found item. They do that in all the spy shows. Like in *The Americans*, they used identities from children who died in infancy.”

“Not everything is a TV series, Henry.”

“She would know. She’s got the lawyer—also, already this anonymous revolutionary priest is helping her, and he would know how to parlay the certificate, maybe, into a whole history . . . a new identity . . . guaranteed.”

“Nina would come back!” Daisy said. “On *Día de los Muertos*, with Mama too.”

“But it would make her Elana’s sister,” said Henry. “Half sister. Whatever. It would kind of ruin their wedding plans.

“You’re right.” Henry grimaced. “It was a stupid idea.

ANDA DUBINSKIS

At the Edge of the Concrete, 2018

Gouache on printed rice paper, 26 x 19 in

