

ROBIN WINFIELD

Copacabana, 2011
Fujiflex crystal archival print and acrylic, 24 x 28



COURTESY: THE ARTIST

KAREN VARGAS

The Old Martinez Hall

“We all come down together”
This is what I told you and you agreed
As we sat on a stump and sang drunkenly
“A la Puerta de Toledo” in the front yard
Of the funeral director’s home
In the old dirt plaza
Of the Ranchos Church
Throwing back tequilas
With one priest and two nuns
Lifting our heavy dresses up
To dance light patadas
In a burst of clean palmas
That moved our small procession
Across the main road at sunset
To the Old Martinez Hall
For Alegrías and Tangos
Surrounded by little girls
Proud bouquets of flowers
A bottle of wine and a lit candle
At every table
We gathered coins and
Standing ovations
Cantadora, you sang
A song by Camarón
For the niñas to dance Sevillanas
Surrounding you
In bright colors and patterns
Of pretty dresses and footwork
Sharp little attitudes
Your voice was
A gust of wind through young leaves
You were a wise old tree
Madre

Karen Vargas is a native of Northern New Mexico. She says, “I wrote this poem to commemorate a time when my family and our friends sang and danced for many years at the old dance hall across the highway from Ranchos de Taos Plaza, site of the San Francisco de Asis Mission Church,” built between 1772 and 1816. Vargas’s poetry and short stories have been published in *Epoch*, *Chokecherries: A S.O.M.O.S. Anthology*, *La Palabra: The Word is a Woman* series, and a number of other books and literary journals. She has received a Taos Resident Writer’s Award and a Voices of Our Nation’s Arts Foundation Residency.