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## It Was the Wind

H. C. Palmer

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Leaving the oval field at the far gate,  
the riders waved to the hoots of the crowd.  
We looked down into the fading afterimage  
as clowns and bellowing steers absorbed the scene.  
There were other scenes, and midway,  
a brief rustle of kids and critters.  
Always the crowd, the lights, the stars above,  
figures and forms innumerable and unnamed.  
We left the arena, hoping to see the hills alone.  
Others stood outside in the lot, silent,  
dreaming on the stars, the night that gives nothing  
but what we ask: faint stars on which to dream,  
a voice of unimpoverished desire at our interior.  
You threw your hands upon my downcast face  
and gave me back my own lost look.  
The parched grass spread tracers of light at our feet.

## *It Was the Wind*

H. C. PALMER  
*Flint Hills, Kansas, circa 1936*

Winter whiteout rattled her windows, slipped beneath  
doors and frosted wooden floors, smothered fence  
posts and a side of the barn. Cattle, even the dogs,  
frozen in drifts.

Spring twister stripped shingles, ripped clapboards  
and launched the barn like an ark into Wabaunsee  
County. Hail shredded the cornfield  
and her garden.

All summer southwind bent the landscape. An empty  
sky sucked everything dry. The windmill, frantic  
for water, pumped air and the Dust Bowl overflowed  
with waves of dirt.

In fall, the wind made her think to stay as cool gusts  
scattered black walnuts. She relished picking the nutmeats,  
but scrubbed at husking-stained hands into winter again—  
and first snow melt.

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*Andrés Rodríguez is the author of Night Song (Tia Chucha Press), a collection of poetry, and Book of the Heart: The Poetics, Letters, and Life of John Keats (Lindisfarne Press), a work of literary criticism. His poems have appeared in Bilingual Review, The Cortland Review, flashquake, Harvard Review, Hubbub, New York Quarterly, Palabra, Valparaiso Review, and other journals. In 2007, Rodríguez won the Maureen Egan Writers Exchange Award in Poetry sponsored by Poets & Writers. He has an MA in poetry from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He lives and works in Kansas City.*