

# The Only Mexican

By David Tomas Martinez

The only Mexican that ever was Mexican, fought in the revolution  
and drank nightly, and like all machos, crawled into work crudo,

letting his breath twirl, then clap and sing before sandpaper  
juiced the metal. The only Mexican to never sit in a Catholic pew

was born on Halloween, and ate his lunch wrapped in foil against  
the fence with the other Mexicans. They fixed old Fords where my

grandfather worked for years, him and the welder Juan wagered  
each year on who would return first to the Yucatan. Neither did.

When my aunts leave, my dad paces the living room and then rests,  
like a jaguar who once drank rain off the leaves of Cecropia trees,

but now caged, bends his paw on a speaker to watch crowds pass.  
He asks me to watch grandpa, which means, for the day; in town

for two weeks, I have tried my best to avoid this. Many times he will swear,  
and many times grandpa will ask to get in and out of bed, want a sweater,

he will ask the time, he will use the toilet, frequently ask for beer,  
about dinner, when the Padres play, por que no novelas, about bed.

He will ask about his house, grandma, to sit outside, he will question  
while answering, he will smirk, he will invent languages while tucked in bed.

He will bump the table, tap the couch, he will lose his slipper, wedging it in  
the wheel of his chair, like a small child trapped in a well, everyone will care.

He will cry without tears—a broken carburetor of sobs. When I speak  
Spanish, he shakes his head, and reminds me, he is the only Mexican.

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