1985

Rivers, Horses and Firewood

Dionisio D. Martinez

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3262
It comes down, feels the house like a hand.  
Your hands would run down my cheeks,  
fall from my face like rain.  
This is memory. This pure silence.  
You learn the most from those  
you hardly know: back in the brief  
days of that other life, my father  
taught me that silence is the longest word.

RIVERS, HORSES AND FIREWOOD

Three cold streams come down  
from the mountains. They meet  
at the bottom and the river begins,  
running west after the sun, running  
straight. When the road was built  
the old bridges were abandoned and  
began to fall and ride the current  
like firewood on a gentle horse.

My father sold firewood  
across the river when he was ten.  
He walked by his horse, running  
his hands up and down the reins  
and thinking of his mother,  
how she stayed home, running  
her hands up and down her rosary  
as if taking her faith by the reins,  
selling her soul to God like firewood.

FABLE

It wasn’t that long ago. Hurricanes  
with the names of women would cross  
the island like packs of wildebeest.  
Hurricanes with the names of our dead: