

## **Killing Mark**

*Richard Blanco*

His plane went down over Los Angeles last week (again), or was it Long Island? Boxer shorts, hair gel, his toothbrush washed up on the shore at New Haven, but his body never recovered, I feared.

Monday, he cut off his leg chain sawing- bled to death slowly while I was shopping for a new lamp, never heard my messages on his cell phone: *Where are you? Call me!* I told him to be careful. He never listens.

Tonight, fifteen minutes late, I'm sure he's hit a moose on Route 26, but maybe he survived, someone from the hospital will call me, give me his room number. I'll bring his pajamas, some magazines.

5:25: still no phone call, voice mail full. I turn on the news, wait for the report: flashes of moose blood, his car mangled, as I buzz around the bedroom dusting the furniture, sorting the sock drawer.

Did someone knock? I'm expecting the sheriff by six o'clock. *Mr. Blanco, I'm afraid...* he'll say, hand me a Ziploc with his wallet, sunglasses, wristwatch. I'll invite him in, make some coffee.

6:25: I'll have to call his mom, explain, arrange to fly the body back. Do I have enough garbage bags for his clothes? I *should* keep his ties- but his shoes? Order flowers- rose- white or red?

By seven-thirty I'm taking mental notes

for his eulogy, suddenly adorning all  
I've hated, ten years worth of nose hairs  
in the sink, of lost car keys, or chewing  
too loud and hugging the bed sheets,

when Joey yowls, ears to the sound  
of footsteps up the drive, and darts  
to the doorway, I follow with a scowl:  
*Where the hell were you? Couldn't call?*  
Translation: *I die each time I kill you.*

Blanco, R. (2012). Killing mark. In *Looking for the gulf motel*. University of Pittsburg Press.