

A Brief History of the Texas Rangers

Mañana, por la mañanita—
Epifania to her comadre, Anita.
Tomorrow, in the little morning,
Epifania, alone,

in that shrunken, gendered hour—she
alone will lower her husband, Genaro,
into a cool, caliche-veined eternity.

Tonight she watches over him, taken down
from the gnarled limb of the old álamo tree,
lowered by strong neighbors—
Quickly! Quickly!—

young vecinos who know the night moves
with the sting of spurs and the neigh
of sweating palominos,

brown men who tell her that the darkness
blooms with gunpowder
and kerosene. Epifania, alone,

rubs sábila into Genaro's thin neck,
collar of raw skin, as if the salve
might bring him back—breathing, clean.

Tonight Genaro's eyes
are two frozen black stars
in the hours before
the little morning.