



JACLR

*Journal of Artistic
Creation & Literary
Research*

JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access Graduate Student Journal of the Universidad Complutense Madrid that publishes interdisciplinary research on literary studies, critical theory, applied linguistics and semiotics, and educational issues. The journal also publishes original contributions in artistic creation in order to promote these works.

Volume 5 Issue 1 (July 2017)

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(no title)

3RD PRIZE "VIRGINIA WOOLF" FOR SHORT NARARTIVE

Recommended Citation

Barquinero, Sara. "(no title)." *JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research* 5.1 (2017)

<<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>>

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It was Sunday morning and you were touching me. You touched me lightly, with the back of your hand, but there was something on the back of that hand: idea, intention, end, purpose. It was Sunday, I was sitting at a table, a wooden table, or maybe it was a plastic one: I don't remember. It was Sunday, I was sitting at, say, any table, and you, undoubtedly, were touching me. It was not a matter of chance, or bad faith whatsoever, but a fact. You knew it, I knew it, the table witnessed it. You wore jeans and your hand was rough, your hand had a roughness I found sweet. If I turned my face towards you, I could watch you chat over the table, or observe you indirectly through the pupils of the others. I could even recreate myself in your memory: after all, we had met before. But the truth is none of that was accurate. Nothing like that could account for what was really happening. It was as if that table, made of wood or plastic, I do not remember; established a division, a limit, an insurmountable chasm between the world-over-the-table and the world-underthe-table. That sub-world was a dimension composed by knees and nails, rough hands and soft hands, blue jeans and nylon panties; but, above all, composed by distances, distances between elements that gave them meaning, distances that shaped and ordered them. It could be said that, in a chaotic world in which things-that-are and things-that-are-not were intermingled, distance was the only

principle. The distance was the budget, the a priori, the first engine of that sub-world: it was, let's say, God.

Your fingers challenged Him playfully, occasionally approaching my nylon panties. My commitment, although silently and passively, made me guilty too. I feared, through the corner of my mouth, through the corner of my eyes, the moment when those tremors that sometimes shake tables, -especially the plastic ones, but also the wooden ones-, would punish me and separate us, such as when someone gets up, another asks for water, a child cries, a salt shaker is required, or a glass is broken. I did not even dare to move and reciprocate, just in case the little tiny run that my pinky would have to catch would dissuade you from going on. Something in the touch of your hand on my knee reminded me, albeit confusedly, every single one of my pasts, those first shy strokes, enquiring glances, short or long fingernails, rough or soft hands, good or bad intentions, fifteen, twenty or thirty-seven years. Your finger slides down my knee, holding onto the bone, grasping the flesh: trying; my thighs react holding their breath, while my last mouthful of air spills on the table in a stupid laugh, triggered by a casual joke, totally disconnected from what is happening a few centimeters below. With each blow, violent, you unearthed a memory, with each blow, vehement, you pulled a confession, a look, a laugh. The whole palm lies down and I think that must be love, that, and not so many other times, that, that, that is.

Then someone got up, another got settled, the food arrived, the child cried, the sauce was poured, the glass was broken, the salt shaker was handed over; and you went away. I shrank, ashamed. We all stood up and left the world-under-the-table, running for the common and stressful planet of stretched legs and raised buttocks, that world full of arms, necks, waists, ears, breasts, gloves. I looked at you, you looked back at me, but it didn't make sense any longer: we had not even been the lovers. As you walked away I thought that perhaps some day, Sunday or not, morning or afternoon, your hand and my knee would meet again. Maybe some day, under a table, made of wood, made of plastic, whatever, they will meet again, please, nylon and nails.

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