

ricardo means-ybarra

After the divorce

small candles make Sunday difficult
parking at the church where
my grandmother forces me to look
into this place
dark as a drive up the coast
when night has carried off
the beach swings and Jungle Gyms
left ice cream and towels
in the middle of the road
packs of dogs waiting
under the guard towers.

I know my grandmother's with St. Teresa
in the alcove
of the 25c candles.
Beautiful St. Teresa, the nuns said she used
crucifixion equipment to stop the ache
a martyr
waiting for me
to light another
of the thin matches in the center
of my palm.
But I won't do it.
I lit them all when I was a kid
until the light climbed into
the hard wood of the pews
and I'd lay there
stare at the smoke
and think of her.