

# Oklahoma r e v i e w

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**Mike Young**

## **Clay in Grandma Claire**

Your grandma Claire had a thing for maps  
and men from New Mexico.

See here in this picture,  
the Halloween party?  
She jiggles her punch cup with candor,  
but a few absent fingers  
hide outside the frame --

there's no doubt, little Katie  
those fingers, poised on a globe,  
tickled a certain desert state.  
Why, you can almost touch  
the lizards' wet tongues.

And there is your grandpa Raul  
looking sour. He's the raven  
in the doily farm:  
her family's Halloween party,  
for which he oiled his hair  
and they offered handshakes  
they never gave.

But alone, Claire loved him to tell,  
and Raul loved her to listen  
of November 1st, Día de los Muertos.

No screaming ninjas  
with greedy grocery bags,  
or moms fret with caution  
over razor blades in apples;

only a long line of souls  
drawn down from the Catholic church,  
hushed on the clay  
with candles and night  
to sprinkle flowers and cigarettes  
upon the other souls.

Tonight, your Grandpa Raul and Grandma Claire

are just pictures.  
There's no doubt, little Katie,  
this is clay we visit.  
And yes, it is a line too long for maps, but hush:  
like us, everyone is here.

We must give them space for light.

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