

humor me



AN ANTHOLOGY
OF HUMOR BY WRITERS
OF COLOR



Edited by John McNally

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Godoy Lives

DANIEL CHACÓN

Juan's cousin wrote what he knew of the dead guy. He was from Jalisco. Not married. Some called him *maricón* because they suspected he was gay, but no one knew for sure.

The age of the man was the same as Juan's, twenty-four, and the picture on the green card strikingly similar, sunken cheeks, small forehead, tiny, deep-set eyes that on Juan looked as if everything scared him, but that on the dead guy looked focused, confident. "You could use this to come work here," his cousin wrote.

It was perfect, Juan thought, if not for the name written on the green card: Miguel Valencia Godoy.

Godoy? Juan wasn't even sure how to pronounce it. His wife Maria held the green card in her small, work-gnarled hand and she looked at the name, then at Juan.

"Goo doy," she said.

He tried: "Guld Yoy."

Patiently she took a breath. "Goo doy."

He practiced and practiced. It got so the entire family was saying it: Maria, their four-year-old boy, Juan Jr., and even the big-eyed baby girl came close with "goo goo." Only Juan couldn't say it. Some nights Maria kept him up late, pushing him awake as he dozed off, until he said it correctly three times in a row.

When the day came for him to leave, he kissed her good-bye, shook his son's hand like a man, and kissed the baby's soft, warm head. The treeless dirt road stretched into the barren hills, reaching the nearest town seven miles away where he would catch the bus to Tijuana.

"I'll be back," he said to Maria.

"I know you will," she said.

"I'll send money when I find work."

"I know you will," she said. She placed a palm on his face. "You're a good man, Juan. I know you'll do what's right."

He looked into her eyes, disappointed that he could not find in them a single tear. She smiled sadly, like a mother sending her child off to school.