**Abuela and Friends, Laredo, Texas 1971**

Vincent Antonio Rendoni

I remember her as short, but her hair  
in this picture is at least ten feet tall.   
Born Manuela, but called Dolores,  
in this photo she’s happy.  
She’s with three of her friends.  
It’s summer and there they are,   
smiling in a row of tinted glasses,   
homemade dresses, and Texas-sized bouffants.  
  
This photo is on its last legs—  
time, Laredo heat, you understand—  
But it’s clear: They’re not thinking  
of what they left behind on the other side of the river.  
They’re not thinking of their husbands,  
their side bets, their gunslinger dreams  
No. It’s one hundred degrees and there’s a pool,  
a pitcher of michelada,   
and they’re together.  
  
In later years, she gave me a piece of advice:  
When you take photos, mijo,  
Write down the names. Write down the dates.  
Because you will forget.  
I think of all the photos I’ve taken since  
And how I always think: next time.