

## *I Traveled South*

JANET JENNINGS

We drove to the coast to sip Black Russians. Cream swirled in an ice-black sea. My name changed every day.

In the afternoon we returned to a house of stained glass and French doors. White muslin curtains moved like water. The sun swept through in oranges and reds.

I walked a long hallway and entered a room of white sand, palms, and wild mangoes. A woman stood against one wall on the edge of a jungle. Black-haired, naked, half hidden by vines. I knew her name.

A bright sea blew in. I found love letters and poems hidden under shells and sand dollars, found Andalusia at the Amazon's edge. She fled into thick landscape.

In a house of stained glass, a man I knew wrote patiently by hand. Colored walls moved like water. He brewed spices in the afternoon, flavoring the air. Cinnamon, citrus, and clove.

Lemon flowers spilled from love letters and poems. I followed their clues to Southern Spain. Searched inside muted trumpet lines, modal music, hand claps of flamenco dancers, bands of horn players along the Guadalquivir.

On a slow train heading south—long curves, low summer hills, rolling waves of sunflowers and orange groves. I traveled the length of its body in search of Andalusia. Lorca whispered in my ear.

A man I knew was writing letters on the other side of the world. I traveled south to the sea

and dove into the whirl of its landscape, spilling foam, coral, shells, colored fins.