

RICARDO PAU-LLOSA

WEDDING RECEPTION

In spin the children,
plated in tux and amber gauze,
inaugurate the drunken joy
of elders now filling
the ballroom,
seating labels in hand.
Two boys and four girls
loom the music.
Siblings who've done this before
last longer than the ring boy
who plops to the parquet
like a tern that undershot the shore.
I recall the compass in science class
stirred by magnets until the teacher
put them away and the needle,
free from the maze of near desires,
settled true north. Its back
also pointed, south. The coin
of bliss and anger will
someday buy them passage
away and into themselves
to fall and wish to never,
to again, to one more,
to a now of whirling thens.