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Denial

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DENIAL¹

*Antoinette Sedillo Lopez*²

alcoholics drink all the time.
faces falling loose around the head,
hair dull with shame.

he really was not an alcoholic
he only drank on week-ends
and he looked good.

alcoholics smell like sour beer
bodies yellow like the babies
jaundiced with the strain of living on their own.

he really was not an alcoholic
he smelled like mint and leather
and his skin was bronze.

¹ This poem, in 2001, won First Place.

² Professor Sedillo Lopez received her bachelors (magna cum laude), from the University of New Mexico in 1979. She graduated from UCLA Law School in 1982. After clerking for the District of Columbia Circuit Court, she joined the law firm of Modrall, Sperling, Roehl, Harris and Sisk, P.C. She joined the faculty of the University of New Mexico Law School in 1986. She has taught Land Use, Civil Procedure, Professional Responsibility, Family Law, Election Law, Comparative Law, and regularly teaches and practices in the Clinical Law Program. She has published various articles in national law journals, including articles on international child abduction, a review of Spanish/ English legal dictionaries, and international advocacy on women's rights. She has spoken on topics in her areas of expertise to regional, national, and international audiences. She has published a six volume anthology, *Latinos in the United States: History Law and Perspective* (Garland Press). She is the series editor for the Garland series, *Latino Communities: Emerging Voices—Social, Cultural, Political and Legal Issues*. Her poetry and creative writing has appeared in *Women's Studies*, *Chicano studies*, and literary journals.

She has served and chaired various boards and commissions. She has served as president of the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association and chair of the Clinical Section of the Association of American Law Schools. She is the past President and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Clinical Legal Education Association.

alcoholics lose their jobs
random life styles choke
their friends and family who finally leave.

he really was not an alcoholic
he worked hard and he only called her “puta”
when he was borracho; it’s just the drink,
don’t you think?

alcoholics go to bars
everyone knows who they are
drinking their pay while kids cry hambre eating
up their hearts.

he really was not an alcoholic
he drank his whiskey at home
and gave grandma his check every week

alcoholics die young
bodies rotting from the poison eating
livers and love.

he lied
about living
to see me finish school
pride
eluded his life
when
he
died.