

CARLA CRAWFORD

Half Light, 2016
Oil on linen, 19 x 14 in



COURTESY WINFIELD GALLERY

JAE KIM

Expectations

We were having coffee at the coffee shop that wouldn't let a customer take coffee to go. We saw this happen: A young woman, probably a student at the nearby university, asked for a paper cup so she could carry out the rest of her latte, and the cashier, another young, beautiful woman, said, "Sorry, ma'am. It's the store policy." A practiced explanation about what happens to coffee over time followed. It felt long-winded, even though it was succinct and well put.

We—Genevieve and I—were saying goodbye because she was moving somewhere warmer and I was staying put. I wasn't sure how she'd answer the question, "Were we close?" That I wasn't sure was perhaps indicative of how close we were. Genevieve was hardly a friend—we were two intelligent women who had met at a local book club. But the goodbye was sad and we certainly acted sad. Acting sad made me confused as to how sad I actually was. Either the acting sad or the saying goodbye made me more aware of the fact that I might not see Genevieve ever again. Probably the saying goodbye did. Acting sad—I was sad, though not as sad as I was acting—made me glad I wouldn't see her again, unless one of us went out of the way to get in touch with the other. It meant if I had to see her again, I would have to act glad—though I would be glad. It meant the second time we said goodbye, I would be too cognizant of the first goodbye to relax and let whatever emotion that would otherwise arise arise. But in this moment the goodbye was mostly natural, the emotions didn't feel unpleasant, though I was annoyed by my own association of Genevieve with the things in my apartment that I couldn't bear to throw away because I'd had them for so long. Genevieve told me she used to be this way but, when she hit twenty-five, she realized she'd been letting her things weigh her down, govern her life, and threw them away. Now, the two suitcases behind her constituted all her belongings. I'd never had this epiphany, and Genevieve was like one of my things I couldn't part with. After the parting, after a bit of time, I wouldn't miss her. The parting shouldn't mean much of anything in the first place, given our unremarkable relationship. I decided the best course of action in the future would be to make an excuse and not be available for such an occasion as a goodbye coffee. "I'm sorry I'm out of town; I'm sure I'll see you again. xo Jane."