

JESSICA DUNNE

Sloat at Sunset, 1996
Oil on Linen, 92 x 60 in



PRIVATE COLLECTION, PHOTO CREDIT: DONALD FELTEN

OCTAVIO SOLIS

Last Gallantry of a Badass

There's this unspoken grace period lasting an indeterminate length of time between one fuckup and another, and Irving Childress III knocked on my screen door just as that period came to an end. He stood there on my porch flicking june bugs off the screen with his finger, waiting with the sullen patience of a nun for me to open up. I hid in the kitchen as soon as he knocked, but I knew he saw me. So I downed the last of my brew and went to the door.

Hey Mundo.

Que pasó, Irv.

How're you doin'. How's your mom. She around?

It's after two, dude.

I know it.

I'm about to go to bed.

And I'll let you. But see. I need you to do me a favor.

Is this gonna be about dogs, Irving?

No, it's not gonna be about dogs. Are you still mad at me about that?

I shouldna been, but I was. Most sins in this world are difficult to avoid, but full-on *pendejadas* like stealing your own dog, c'mon. Even my little niece laughed in my face after that one.

This is not about dogs. There ain't a single dog in this one. I swear.

Then what's it about?

I can't tell you just yet.

I gotta get to bed, man.

I turned off the porch light and he went black. I couldn't see even the shape of his long scrawny head and his jug ears. Just all black. But still through the screen door I heard his voice break.

It's Bobbie. She and me got into it. And she broke it off, man. Threw her ring right in my face. You know, our promise ring. And it was over some dumb thing, I don't know. Something about *mole*, her mother's *mole*. She thinks I don't like her mother's *mole*.

Do you?

No. But she's wrecking the whole thing over nothin', man. And it was beautiful. I never had a girl like Bobbie. She's like my whole reason for existence. I gotta make it up some way, man. I just gotta.

I turned the porch light back on and he was looking down, wiping his nose with his fingers and smearing them