

PETER PAONE

Used, 2014
Acrylic on Mylar, 40 x 30 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

OCTAVIO SOLIS

Mundo Means World

There I was sitting on the porch taking in the Saturday morning rays in my pajama pants and T-shirt, nursing a cup of Mom's *café con leche* with the light buzz of my doobie taking hold. The grackles with their oil-slick wings scattered as Louie-Louie rolled by in his royal-blue Chevy Impala with the mag wheels and chrome bumpers, like he always did on weekends. Only this time he pulled into the driveway. That sleek machine next to my car reminded me that no matter how I customized it with a cherry-red Earl Scheib paint job and new tires, my Gremlin would always be a Gremlin. There went my buzz.

Louie-Louie sat in his car with his sunglasses on like the Prince of Low and waved me over to him. He never got out of his ride if he could help it. Some people thought it was laziness on his part and rude too, and some even wondered if he had legs at all. But I knew better. That Impala was Louie-Louie's throne and as long as he sat on it, he was king. Why would he abdicate that when there was enough daily shit in this dusty old town to make us all feel provincial? I slipped into my flip-flops and sauntered over all cool and easy.

¿Qué onda, Louie-Louie?

Nada-nada. How about you, bruh?

I'm cool.

Been too long, ese. You high?

Just a hit. Keep it down. My mom, sabes.

I'm hip. How's your sister doin'?

Still married.

I don't see it lasting.

Like a lot of the guys that called themselves my friends, or *camaradas*, in the jargon of my time, Louie-Louie took an undue interest in my sister Mickie. It didn't matter that she was already married and had a four-year-old kid to show for it. He was waiting for the day she'd come to her senses and ride off with him to some romantic getaway like Carlsbad Caverns. Like that day would ever come.

Mundo, I need you to do me a solid.

A what?

A favor, bruh. I need your help.

For what?

Without taking his eyes off me, he reached under the seat and whipped out something wrapped in newspaper.