

Crescent City

Pia Z. Ehrhardt

My son's best friend Dart is handsome, his clefty chin even with my eyes, and I can no longer comment. A blister pocks his thumb from the frayed leopard handle on my tennis racquet. He likes to borrow. I used to play on the center court at City Park with a dentist who wore his curly hair in three pigtails. My two-handed backhand worked then, my left hand handcuffing my right. Fifteen! Love! Epic late night games under streetlamps that drew bugs in for a blessing. After, we drank ice cold beer for the protein. Dart works on a tanker at the Erato Street wharf, loads kilos of coffee beans. Espresso? He brings back my racquet on his way home, and a shirt he borrowed from my son that I will not smell or touch much before I wash it with my jeans. Evenings, he plays tuba in a brass band that practices on the levee. Blow! Even distribution between the lip surfaces creates an effective embouchure. His low tones cross the mighty Mississippi and settle on the West bank of the river, not in my backyard.