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Daryl Scroggins

MIDSTREAM PANTOMIME, RIO GRANDE

The women stand by the river with their shoes in their hands. They look north for a moment. Fortuna starts across, then Emelda, and finally all the rest. But Fortuna slips. She totters for an instant, almost catching herself, but sits down suddenly in the muddy drift—shoes held high. Everybody stops. "Hey Fortuna," Emelda calls out. "You won't track mud on floors, but how you going to get cleaning work when you so dirty?" Everybody laughs. And Fortuna makes a show of swimming on her back in shallow water, the brilliant white shoes held up like victims of near drowning, saved from a brown tide.