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Fallen Pride

Mary Dengler
Dordt College, mary.dengler@dordt.edu

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Fallen Pride

Mary Dengler

I saw the Woman fall—she was 80-ish,
I'd guess, and dressed old-school respectably
In high-heeled shoes, white shimmering hose,
Full-skirted dress of blue, rouged cheeks and well-shaped hair,
Enjoying pleasures in a culture now her own, in her own way.
Phalanxed by her friends or sisters, one each side,
She walked with pride the city's ocean pier a Sunday afternoon.

Approaching from behind like others on a powerwalk,
I stopped—
She'd tripped.
She threw her arms out wide,
Her high heel caught between the boards, familiar
to the fishers, walkers, surfers underneath.
Her knee hit first.
Then she crumbled.
Then she lay out sideways, stunned.
My first impulse was "Oh, Oh no." I
Couldn't help it—she was Mother, Grandma,
Every older girl transcendent of conformity,
Her dignity the quiz of gazers-on.

"Perdone me, no tengo cell-phone," I began. "Quieres doctor?"
"No, no necessito doctor,"
She replied, oblivious of her bruise,
Her bleeding knee, the stocking shredded by
The twisted , scraping foot.
"Necessitas estes" I said, pointing at my stalwart shoes.
"O, si?" she asked straining, as she started that long journey
To her feet.

Without my aid, she stood, her arms supported
By her friends. Not turning back, she limped
On towards the end, still many feet away.
"She'll finish her long walk," I guessed,
"and come again, and wear again her Sunday best.
She'll choose her footing well."