

Self-Portrait

by Rodrigo Dela Pena, Jr.

If I am turned away
from you, it is because
I am giving my attention
to the distance, that vanishing
point where all lines converge.
If I am outlined while all
around me is a blur
of pastel pinks and soft
purples, it only means
that stillness takes the shape
of what the heart longs for
in silence. Imagine
my face, a life hidden
between dreaming and waking
up, between childhood and old
age. I am the woman
whose breath is the air no one
can see, whose hem reaches
the ground beneath my feet.
I gather what colors slip
through my fingers. I fill
each minute to empty
it back, each moment beating
again and again and again.



Image: "Belle of the Ball" by Vasu Tolia. "Self-Portrait" was written by Rodrigo Dela Pena, Jr. for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, January 2019, and selected as the Artist's Choice.