

DAN ENCARNACION

Hearsay.

from the novel in verse, *Rhumba*

It don't cost none to make no child.

It just cost to keep one.

Gaveston will hear.

Hear his mother.

In the dining room, his mother.

Don't you consider.

Don't you consider all the pain.

All the pain of birthin' that baby a cost?

Gaveston will hear.

Hear his Auntie Sophe flicking and tinkling.

Auntie Sophe will always be.

Flicking and tinkling to punctuate and pace her phrasing.

That ain't no cost.

Flicking her bridge and tinkling her teaspoon against a Wedgwoodesque teacup stirring and stirring in the
Coffeemate.

Auntie Sophe will always be stirring.

That ain't no cost.

Stirring in something artificial.

A cost is something you want to keep but got to give away to go on living.

A cost is something that man made, not God.

God made pain and God made women to feel pain and God made women to endure.

Gaveston will hear.

Hear his sisters and girl cousins talking as if they were women.

Sisters and girl cousins talking as they were women in the kitchen.

Gaveston will hear.

Hear his baby brother and boy cousins beating the shit out of each other upstairs and crying.

Gaveston will know that they're slapping and yelling at and throwing around each other through tears.

He had to do that when he fought off his sisters.

Gaveston will know they can't see each other really.

Gaveston will hear.

Hear his mother.

So what you're saying.

So what you're saying is that 'cause your kids were made from you, they can be a cost if you had to give them up.

Gaveston will hear his Auntie Sophe.

That's if I wanted to keep them. They only cost when you keep them.

But you said a cost is something you give away.

I know what I'm saying.

I know what I'm saying.

Gaveston will hear.

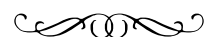
Hear flicking and tinkling.

Flicking and tinkling.

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ABOUT DAN ENCARNACION



Dan Encarnacion lives in Portland, Oregon. He has previously been published in *MARGIE*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Eleven Eleven*, and *Upstairs at Duroc*. His poem "Aposiopesis" was nominated for the 2014 Pushcart Prize.

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