

Nina Rubinstein Alonso

Family Trapeze: Listening to La Vieja

Starts to say something
gets distracted after a few
phrases about Argentina
that day at the carousel when

silver forks and spoons were
bundled wrapped then hidden
inside her coat sleeve not sure who
smuggled knives onto the boat

for Christmas vacation in Uruguay
or possibly it was July as she's collecting
torn bits and pieces from her photo
album no way to be certain whose knee

or back of the head that was or what
in hell happened leaves me dangling ready
to take one hand off the family trapeze
then let go with the other

no use fretting or struggling
to weave something whole as
this foggy chronology's all that's left
of our fractured tale still sufficiently

grand that I bow in admiration
to La Vieja queen mother Joan
no longer need to care or wonder
which of the pieces goes where.

Nina Rubinstein Alonso's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Broadkill Review*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Writing in a Woman's Voice*, etc. Her book *This Body* was published by David Godine Press, her chapbook *Riot Wake* is upcoming from Cervena Barva Press and a story collection is in the works.