San Antonio Review

The Kiss

Gary Metras

Published on: Jun 23, 2019

Updated on: Aug 22, 2020

License: [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC-BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Image: Original painting by [Brianna Keeper](#), digitized by [William O. Pate II](#).

For mothers, grandmothers, aunts,
 the odd uncle, a peck on the cheek,
 a brush of lips, all demanded,
 all mostly deserving, even if lips
 are chapped or crinkled with age or regret;
 for sisters and cousins, the same, plus a hug
 at weddings and funerals, the family cook-out,
 and it could be whisper brief or prolonged
 like adolescent desires still secret;
 for daughters and nieces, the same; though
 embarrassed in their awkward teens,
 they know a kissy-hug is coming and submit;

but imagine what they tweet their friends
later that night, alone in their rooms, alone
with rumors of the first real kiss,
the perfect kiss, which is never that good
to begin with, but they won't believe you
if you tell them; besides, bedroom dreams
and fantasies are exactly here where they belong.

Gary Metras's new books of poetry are White Storm (Presa Press 2018) and Captive in the Here (Cervena Barva Press 2018). The author of sixteen previous collections of poetry, his poems have appeared in America, The Common, Poetry, Poetry East, and Poetry Salzburg Review. He lives in Easthampton, Massachusetts, where he has just completed his appointment as the city's first Poet Laureate.