

## Alumno

By Kate Mullikin

An old student chum  
Of yours just told me about  
Your untimely death.

He was disgusted.  
He said they shot you  
In the head and chest -

I guess my shot at guiding you  
Away from a violent life didn't take.

I knew you when you were 13 going on 30  
And now you're gone at 29  
And I feel as if my heart will break.

You used to laugh, as you'd beat me at baraja  
And you played that mariachi trumpet  
Like you were the king of corridos.

I can hear you play it now.  
I can hear the excitement in your voice  
The day you discovered "Flight of the Bumble Bee."

I am remembering you buzzing around our campus  
Singing, laughing, helping to bring your band  
To the school-wide Cinco de Mayo festival.

I am watching you reach across a crowd of  
Family and friends to make sure  
That you shake my hand  
On your graduation day -

Reassuring me, loudly and proudly,  
That you'll never get mixed up  
With people in gangs.

I miss you Alumno.

## A Graduation Wish

By Kate Mullikin

I wish for you  
A day when you are satisfied  
A place where you feel wanted  
A moment when you realize  
You can live a life undaunted

I wish for you  
A home that is not shelter  
A quiet place to read  
A thought that might spark desire  
A reason to succeed

I wish for you  
A word of praise from a parent  
A high-five from a friend  
A high school teacher to lift you up  
A passion that never ends

I wish for you  
A day without Facebook  
A night without Gameboy  
An hour without texts  
I hope that you can date and dance  
And find romance  
Without immediately having sex

I wish for you not  
To drink and drive  
Or get mixed up in drugs  
Go get mixed up in words and art  
Go give and get more hugs

I dream that you will love yourself  
And discover what you're worth  
And that you feel it's worth it  
To make a better life on earth.

## Instructions from an Urn

By Kate Mullikin

I'm tired of noticing you out of  
The corner of my eye  
When I open the linen closet  
To grab a towel.  
"Release me!" that's what I hear you howl.  
But again I shut the door.

Since you've been gone, it seems there's been  
No time for rituals; plane fares are too expensive  
And besides, you never told me  
What to do with the rest of you dad.  
And I didn't want to think about it any more.

Yet just yesterday, I awoke hearing you shouting  
Instructions from inside the urn,  
"Dump these old dead bones  
Ground down to a pulp  
On a shelf in your home  
Ground yourself,  
And there will be more space for my song."

That urn will be gone tomorrow,  
Along with two years residual sorrow.