

2003

Mafia Mexican

Jolienne Plucknette
St. John Fisher University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle>

 Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

[How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?](#)

Recommended Citation

Plucknette, Jolienne (2003) "Mafia Mexican," *The Angle*: Vol. 2003: Iss. 4, Article 13.
Available at: <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol2003/iss4/13>

This document is posted at <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol2003/iss4/13> and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at . For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjf.edu.

Mafia Mexican

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"You've seen him a thousand times. Well, maybe not a thousand, but most likely every day for as long as you've been working downtown. You notice him, but you really don't notice him. He's there every time you head into the business district. He's like a pocket watch. Each day, arriving at exactly 8:30 a.m. He brings his worn burlap bag, and scuffs down the steps, taking his place on the landing that heads down to the inbound train on the Green subway line."

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: Volume 3, Issue 4, 2003.

JOLIENNE PLUCKNETTE

MAFIA MEXICAN

FIRST LINE FROM *THE PATENTED GATE AND THE MEAN HAMBURGER*
BY ROBERT PENN WARREN

You've seen him a thousand times. Well, maybe not a thousand, but most likely every day for as long as you've been working downtown. You notice him, but you really don't *notice* him. He's there every time you head into the business district. He's like a pocket watch. Each day, arriving at exactly 8:30 a.m. He brings his worn burlap bag, and scuffs down the steps, taking his place on the landing that heads down to the inbound train on the Green subway line.

Today is Monday, and once again, you get your pass out of your pocket and turn the corner to head down the steps. You feel the stagnant, warm air rising up from underground. You feel as if you are breathing in used air. You suffocate as you remember the thoughts of the day ahead. You pass him.

He's hunched over, leaning against the white speckled brick. He is always in the same spot, covering one portion of the violet and black graffiti, so you can't ever make out the entire word. All you see are the first three letters, M-A-F.

He is almost thirty-five; a few faint wrinkles linger near his dark green eyes. His auburn hair hangs down below his eyebrows and over his ears. He wears four hoop earrings in his left ear. His neck is tan, and around it hangs a large beaded hemp necklace. He rarely changes his clothing. His torn, baggy jeans are much too long for his legs, draping over his dark brown sandals. His toes are dirty from the dusty city streets. He wears layers of shirts that claim he attended college or belonged to several organizations. Did he ever attend Boston University? Was he once a hockey player? You wonder about his past. You decide there is no possible way he's lead a normal life. Who would choose life on the street?

There is a quality about him that makes you think he appreciates this life. He doesn't ask for change, or play an instrument. He seems as if he truly enjoys watching people pass him every morning. It seems this might be his hobby. He seems comfortable.

You stride past him each morning caught in your own thoughts, thinking only of the stressful day which lies ahead, hardly noticing him.

Something about his presence each day on the landing forces you to continue toward the train each morning, and not turn around. The train takes you down the *right* track, to the life you were taught you should have. You are successful, because the train forces you to be. It only moves in one consistent path. Consistency gets it to its final destination. Consistency gets you to your final destination. . . .

I have seen her a thousand times on her way to work each morning. I could show her that life shouldn't be lived by the expectations of others, of society. I could teach her that spontaneity is crucial to her survival. I could make her appreciate all the things in life that she is truly good at. I could help her look deeply into the world around her, and see past her routine. I could teach her to truly see things.

I'll only be here one more day. Will she *notice* when I'm gone? She will notice, but not really *notice*. Does she *need* to see me in the morning to get on the train? I see how she studies me everyday. I see her face every morning as she rounds the corner. She doesn't know how much longer she can last in her world. I could've had that life, her life. She doesn't realize that I chose this life. Not out of laziness, but because I refused hers. I refused a predictable life. I refused it all. . . .

You think of him once again as you round the corner to the subway stairs. It is Tuesday, and reaching for your pass, you see the familiar spray paint on the landing wall. A purple word scribbled in cursive and outlined in black, its paint slightly blending together. Its colors so vibrant, you ask yourself why anyone would mind its presence there on the landing. The thick, black paint seems too heavy, and drips partially down the wall. You make out the word "Mafia Mexican," and wonder where he is. A swirl of dust and bits of papers scuff along the empty space. You continue down the stairs and wait.

You look up to the sound of your train approaching. The syncopation of the rails as the train glides over them leaves a beat in your head. You begin singing a song to yourself. The train rumbles past without you, slowly picking up speed. You close your eyes, and you are happy for the first time.