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Cliché

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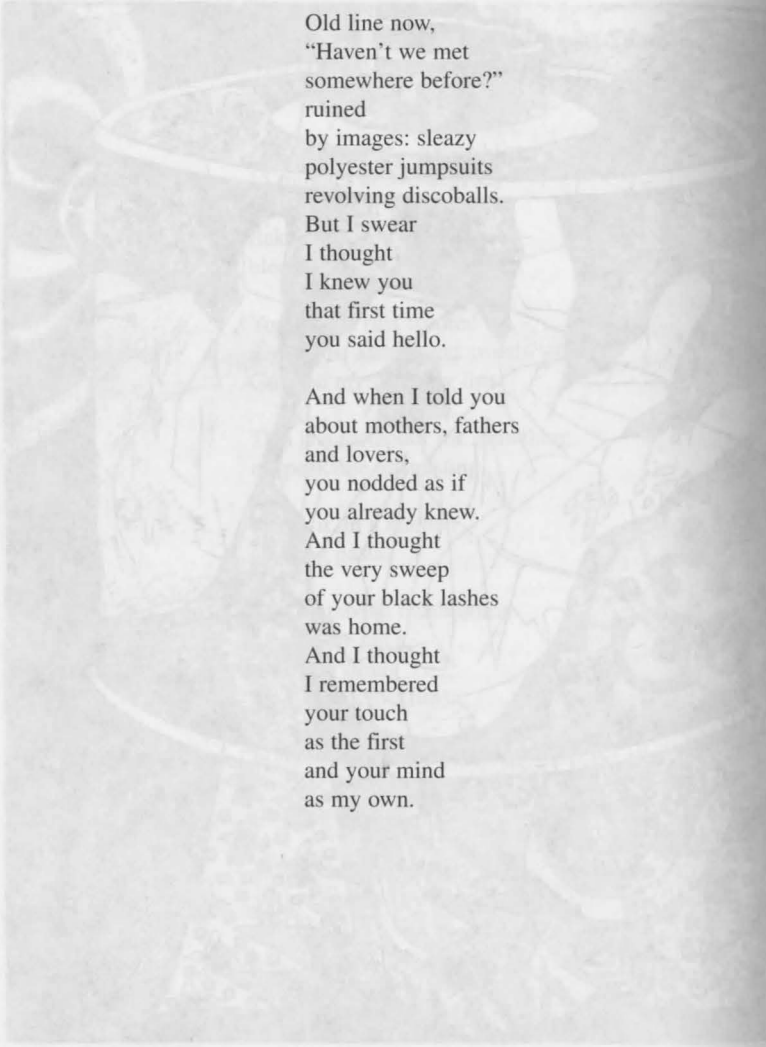
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Cliché



Old line now,
“Haven’t we met
somewhere before?”
ruined
by images: sleazy
polyester jumpsuits
revolving discoballs.
But I swear
I thought
I knew you
that first time
you said hello.

And when I told you
about mothers, fathers
and lovers,
you nodded as if
you already knew.
And I thought
the very sweep
of your black lashes
was home.
And I thought
I remembered
your touch
as the first
and your mind
as my own.

I am reminded that both
art and speaking are how
other selves are still

You told me
 last night
 about the "love
 of your life."
 Another phrase
 worn thin
 so often
 misused,
 and she sounded
 like no one
 I'd ever known
 or ever wanted to
 know,
 really.

And I answered
 you, lips tight,
 fighting
 the grimace,
 "I'm happy
 if you're happy,"
 and you went
 home satisfied,
 leaving me
 to wonder
 if it had ever been
 anything
 more than stale.

—Angel Lemke '00