

My Brother Outside a Cantina at Night, Mexico

by Jerry Ratch

On the mantelpiece
suddenly there it is
the picture taken of him

in his thin, swanky
black leather jacket
out on the town at night
in Mexico with his girlfriend

Holding a small cheroot
in his hand
with his palm upward

His head turned in profile
looking at her as if to say:
"Is this cool or what?"

The hair well over his
ear and collar
Elvis Presley sideburns
At the height of his power

enjoying life after
closing a deal
on an empty building
somewhere

There is something
about the way he's
holding that cheroot
between his thumb
middle and ring fingers
with his palm held upward —

relaxed beyond reason
outside a loud cantina
casting shadows in the warm
brightly-lit Mexican night

