

Both "Spring in Genesta" and "Family Portrait with Lana Turner" came out of a manuscript project (*Valleyspeak*) I recently completed, one obsessed with noir as a lens to solve the who dunnit of childhood, providing a fictional scrim against which I could revision growing up white and female in the San Fernando Valley (a California dream of a suburb for Los Angeles and the center of America's porn industry) with a good deal of privilege, a fair amount of addiction, and very few reliable authority figures, let alone trustworthy narrators.

The larger project *Valleyspeak* follows a family of four in the suburban shadow of the Hollywood dream, a place of once-hopeful blonde bombshells and bathroom vanity marquees, mothers who teach children to leave Easter cupcakes by men asleep on the beach, Baby Boomer fathers who wander through orange groves with divorce papers, refugees from El Salvador who raise the kids white middle-class parents want to leave behind, and tween girls floating out to sea on pool noodles under smog and red moons.

For me, noir became a fresh way to deal with non-punctual trauma. I want my reader to understand we're in an environment of continual perversion, especially of the sexual and violent kind, but that there's art and even laughter to be found here in the darkest bits.