

The Camel & Cain: A Photo Essay

Shahé Mankerian

The camel flashes a permanent smile.

No one sees the rock in my brother's fist.

He simply scowls at the camera. Since he's two years older, he should be sitting on the hump,

with arms akimbo, like Yul Brynner in *The King and I*. But I claim that throne

in tweed shorts, shirtless, above ground.

My sandals near my brother's ear. But no one

sees the intentional scuff. No one sees my fall after the rock hits my forehead. Father drops

the camera to catch me. No one sees blood in black and white. I still have a cursed scar.

Shahé Mankerian is the principal of St. Gregory Alfred and Marguerite Hovsepian School in Pasadena and the co-director of the Los Angeles Writing Project. As an educator, he has been honored with the Los Angeles Music Center's BRAVO Award, which recognizes teachers for innovation and excellence in arts education. His poems have won Honorable Mentions in 2011 Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award and Arts & Letters Journal of Contemporary Culture. Shahé was a Semi-Finalist for the Knightville Poetry Contest. He was the first place winner of 2012 "Black and White" anthology series from Outrider Press. Mankerian's most recent manuscript, *History of Forgetfulness*, has been a finalist at four prestigious competitions: the 2013 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry Open Competition, the 2103 Bibby First Book Competition, the Quercus Review Press, Fall Poetry Book Award, 2013, and the 2014 White Pine Press Poetry Prize.