

The bridegroom comes

by [Philip C. Kolin](#) in the [July 6, 2016](#) issue

He fell in love with her jade eyes  
searching for him on the river bank

a few miles above Mobile  
at her father's fishing camp.

He spoke to her through  
Gulf breezes and gray-dawn gulls

and lavished prophecies on her  
the way tides speak of the deep.

Anointing her words, he poured  
ancient Seraphic chants and

refrains, without rhyme, into her  
voice as joyful as timbrels at betrothals.

Next to her curl-edged Bible  
she kept her cigarettes, lit lamps

waiting in the moonless, salty night  
ready when he called her back

across the river raptured with stars,  
their flasks overflowing with oil.