

Eldest Son

By Charlotte Clymer - Washington, D.C.

There's a word for the eldest son in many cultures:

In Korea, it's *jangnam*;

In Japan, it's *Chōnan*;

In Nigeria, it's *Okpara*;

In Germany, it's *erstgeborener Sohn*.

Go to New Delhi and over chai, a proud Amma
May tell you about her *barā beṭā*.

In Moscow, frigid in bone and spirit, children are
Told fairytales of the antagonizing but ambitious *starshiy syn*,
Who often fails, only to be usurped by his kid brother.

In England and France and Spain, the firstborn son
Was once prized to save royal bloodlines and whole heads.

There is nothing so illustrious to be found
In the trailer parks of Central Texas.

I was "the man of the house" in
More bereft circumstances.

I was *bubba* in moments of pride.

I'd slip back into my room at night, understanding
All that was expected of me for every tomorrow to come,

And falling asleep, I'd whisper my name for myself

And hope to someday meet her.