

**Louise Moises,      Chirico Paints the Girl with a Hoop**

Wandering in a world of my own perspective,



I exist in a vacuum,  
in the smell of oil paint  
and damp rags.  
I paint what is missing,  
forcing an ocher of Mediterranean sun  
on a pathway between silent edifices.  
My bones ache,  
the beat of my heart  
echoes between stucco walls  
I paint her dark profile  
on the day she disappeared,  
before she saw the figure loitering,  
a shadow on the sun-bleached street.  
She innocently rolled her metal hoop  
past a vacant trailer without wondering  
where the horses had gone,  
past receding buildings,  
past empty doorways,  
she chased the toy down the street,  
unaware of danger.  
I paint the moment in time,  
before she trembled,  
lost control of the hoop.  
Stolen from me in that day of dark and light,  
I take up brush to spread the canvas  
with a rescue of oil paint,

too late to stop destiny,  
too late to save the child.  
I paint the unknown moment  
before she was lost,  
before she fell into the shadow,  
before the hoop clattered on the pavement.