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Chantix

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Chantix

Sara Schellenberg

I am stomping sparks
on the driveway for the last time
so maybe I'll outlive my brother,
and be there to not smoke at his grave
while he is turning to maggots
and I am waiting to be ashed.
Doctor says I should quit smoking.
I know, I know, don't you see
I am embarrassed
Ashtray strangers asking my age like
they got license to smoke, they
down-low enough, French or hip
or gay enough, blue-collar or butch,
black-and-white, white-trash,
Dada or Ab-Ex enough.
stand sour in the rain.
try to keep it tender.
Forgive the early memory of black foil,
dad sitting cross-legged in the fireplace, the first sight
and smell I can remember as loving him.
Chimney-father tells me my lungs ring hollow
and deep like a drum. Now
under fluorescent lights
I am my brother, shooting cans
and scurrying away white camels, bald head
thrown down against the cruiser,
reeking like bad Nino
who threw wheelies on the dry grass,
like the tan jacket dad wore in the driveway--
quit smoking years before the dark
pansies
bloomed like a puddle
and made him into stick-man.
Doctor says his lungs are still pink and fresh
No more lung-drum beating now, sick man
still misses the cigs
I'm stepping back inside soon
wearing dad's tan jacket. Don't worry--