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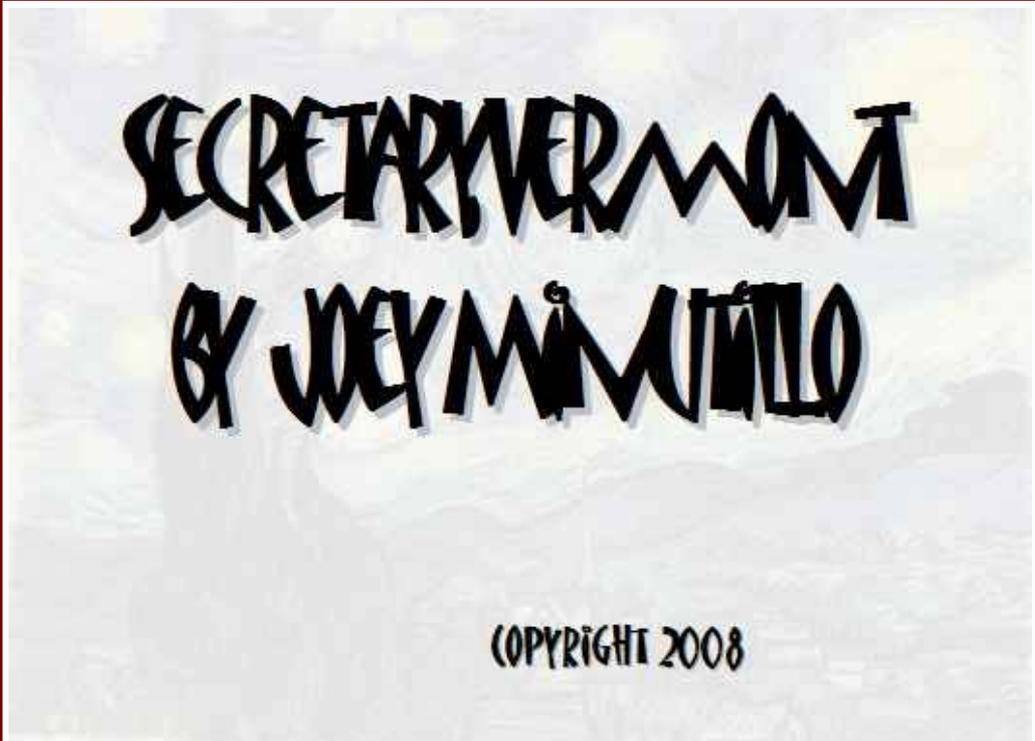
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Some men wearing flannel and hats with white brims shovel gravel into piles. Other men lay thin layers of mortar between asymmetrical bricks with the dull edges of their trowels. The mazes of mortar are mirrors to the one-lane roads constructed by the same flannel men weeks prior. Houses are still pine skeletons with wind whistling through their bones.

Children stand on piles of pea gravel, tugging floppy checkered hats to their ears. Strong gusts of wind lift their arms. Their mothers stand in half-circles, drinking from insulated brown thermoses, keeping one eye on the children sliding down the piles on their bottoms, kicking up ghostly clouds of gray dust, their other eye on the masons raising their trowels like pistols.

The dirt becomes littered with bootprints and the outlines of shovel heads and the handprint's of children catching themselves at the bottom of the gravel piles. Mothers huddle closer together as the sun falls behind a tree. The warmth from their cinnamon cider breath the only touch of comfort. One child walks into the frame of a conduit and looks up into the sky, begging for his finished house to have a roof of stars.

Joey Minutillo graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing from Ball State University. His work can be found in *Literary Tonic*, *Writing Outside the Margins* and was one of the editors in *The Broken Plate*, Ball State's Undergraduate literary magazine. He has literature forthcoming in *No Posit Volume 3*. In December 2007, Joey released his first chapbook, *New Ancillary Barbarism* and is currently working on a new chapbook which is due out in July. In his free time, he enjoys Volkswagens, collecting video games, film theory, and professional baseball.