

[Home](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer 2008](#)

[Winter/Spring 2008](#)

[Autumn 2007](#)

[Summer 2007](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

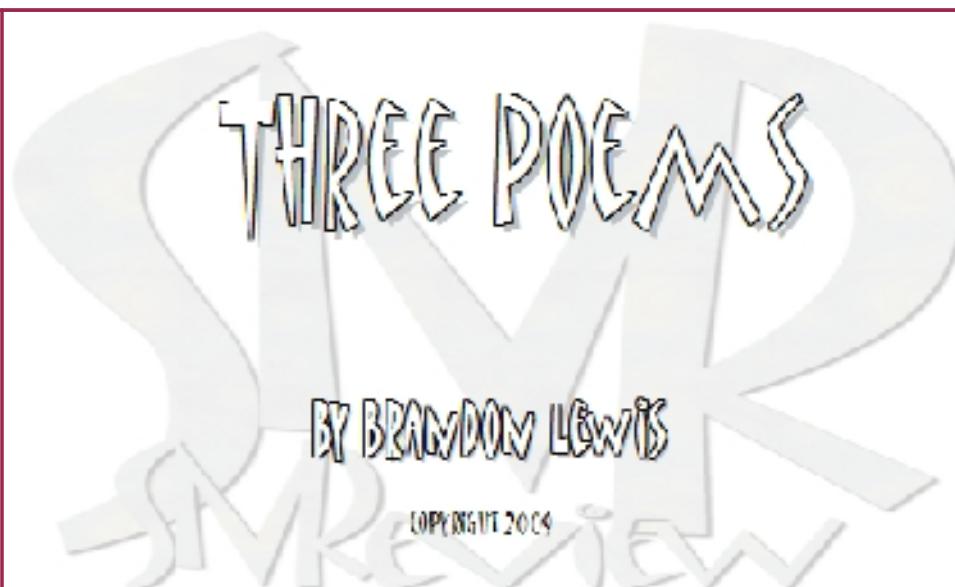
[Summer 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Contact](#)



Summer

I sit sunburned on the cool floor
and wipe the dust
from wooden chair legs

some is my own
dander shed

Instead of all the outer
gray tresses of fiber

why won't the body be fruitful
and grow tiny vegetables
or curled blooms?

The jade plant I carry
rented room to rented room
needs a push after being
left in shadow by the coming
sun's perihelion

thoughts of winter
bring convalescence

Bringing the Baby Over

Dust falls in the window-light
as I shake out the rugs.
My ex enters, kisses my cheek and lays down

the other man's baby.

She's tired today, she says, and it is cold,
but her cheeks glow.
The window is open too wide and the wind

rustles newspapers on the table.

I approach Aria, the baby—too small
to reveal features of a man I've never met.
I find only her mother's blondness, a few freckles.

It was sudden, she said. And we promised to stay

always friends. I said. Showing the girls out,
I want to present gift—animal crackers, maybe.
But I'm sure my shelves are bare,

and besides, Aria hasn't grown a tooth.

A low, calcium-bursting cloud hovers
over their car as they drive off—a perfect
oval, but for a missing curve. I remember now

how she'd devour an entire Granny Smith apple,

savoring its dark seeds. And her knack
to blink slowly, to acknowledge yes, the universe
plodded us this way, to this juncture, this.

I close the front door.

And in place of a biological end,
minor intimacies draw my way.
A painting tilted in the living room, that's one.

In it, the drifts of snow sloping along

a barn, stark and sturdy. The pint
of sweet applesauce I find, later, inside the cupboard.

Turnpike

We learn the ipod is dead
passing refineries fogged in summer rain,

the highway trees. Inside,

we must resemble the other passengers
whose necks bow as cut sunflowers.

Every stranger handles silence,

just as woodland creatures
shuck and scuttle the shells of acorns,

and come the muzzled cacophony

of throat-clearings, the varieties
crow-like, marvelous, civil.

My scapula—handle-bar of the chest,
object of your bus-time rest—
hardly cushions when sleep comes.

Shoulders be fleshier and the dusk
bluer if it must be gray,
to buttress us. We leave
New York and its handsome ugliness.

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Brandon Lewis is a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is former Poetry Editor of *Porcupine Literary Magazine*. After received his MFA in poetry from George Mason University in 2008, he continues to write poetry, drawing much inspiration from other art forms. His poems and French translations can be found in journals such as *Poet Lore*, *Oranges and Sardines*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Borderlands*, and *Phoebe*. Brandon Lewis lives in Washington, DC.