

[Home](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Spring 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Mail](#)

TWO POEMS BY ADAM PELLEGRINI

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Dawn

Does the morning
remember me, because I
remember it: the air

just like this, with
condensation from
night—waking

in my tent, father
already snapping twigs
into a fire, mother

out walking, sister
still wrapped in
sleep. The sun started

shallow just like today,
first stretching
for tips of clouds,

stirring blue into
the dark sky--I remember
birds like these

conversing over berries,
swooping in unison
for a branch or just

following each other
in skips along the ground,
though these buildings

weren't there, filed
and neatly stacked and
there were no stalks of industry

spitting smoke above
the roofline, no
roofline. Still,

this morning/in this city/

this school, things
don't seem so different--

years from that camp site and somehow
the hair-dryers and blaring cartoons
call like a loon from these neighborhoods:

mournful with birds pricking the air
like needles over skin,
uncaged as though

they could swim up,
find no surface,
be able to go back.

Nothing Like Toil

Like sanding a porch
in August, squatting stiff-
backed above a palm-sander's
spin in the kind of heat
which not even this wood/paint
/sealer could help but wrinkle in--
sun spitting on my neck
and arms, the smell of aging: air cut
by fresh cut lawn. Everything
retracting but this light
seeming to start in the steps, railing,
siding and swell
the way it used to gleam
from my father's
glasses when he would stalk
the mower through our yard when
I was still too young
to do the work, still thought
it would stay there, bright.

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Adam Pellegrini is the co-editor of *The Cartographer Electric* (www.cartographelectric.com), a literary magazine he helped found at Binghamton University. He has published poems with *The Paterson Literary Review*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *The Edison Literary Review*, *The Susquehanna Review* and *SNReview*.