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## Blue Collar

by *Alyse Bense*

*I have been  
reading the history of my problems  
with men for as long as  
I have been living it*

December haul and snow wear your hands  
already pricked with scars and tattoos,  
skin cracked and hardened by cold air.  
I am parked in front of your apartment,  
while old men in plastic chairs lean forward,  
leering, while I walk up to your stoop,  
knock with the side of my uncovered fist, exposed  
to winter. And when I am inside the warmth  
of your arms, marked as your hands,  
in the only place you keep immaculate,  
the floor littered in empty soda cans, paper,  
I stay awake, feeling your chest expand  
against my own, waiting for the 5am alarm  
that sends us both away shivering.

Line from Alison Hawthorne Deming "Making Love to You  
When You're Far Away," *Genius Loci*

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A native of York, PA, **Alyse Bense** received her MFA in poetry from Penn State in 2012. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in publications including *MAYDAY Magazine*, *Cider Press Review*, and *Word Riot*. She now lectures in English at Penn State, volunteers for a cat rescue and participates in a work-share program at a local CSA farm in State College

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