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Three Poems

by *Domenic Scopa*

Hot Peppers

a strip club in Prague

After several beers my vision scans the bar mirror—attentive, beaming lighthouse. High heels click. Strobes ignite her platinum wig. On my thigh, her manicured fingernails trace figure eights—*I bet you'd like to have your way with me, American?*—My posture stiffens tight as her corset. Fresh out of a relationship, I switch the subject, brag I toured a Nazi work camp earlier that day for college—*University?* she asks. *Then you must have learned about the Jewish son and father forced to kill each other in the captain's pool, college boy?*—Her English broken and sharp. I rise to leave—*I bet you didn't miss your shot to photograph the gas chamber*—my stool keels over—I stumble toward a set of double doors. The bouncer cracks the granite profile of his face to wink—*she's a feisty one, American*—his pupils constricted, his mustache clogged with pilsner.

Dementia

for my grandmother

She's been stuck, bastard,
on your hook
for seven years, been
wriggling there, curled
up, her half-forgotten
memories—flashes of leaves
on a wet road waiting
to be crushed by every car
full of what's reminded
over and over and yet
the line's not taut—it's clear
(to me). Choose
another worm. She's truly
beautiful, her infantile
obliviousness being among
the cherished catch—All
the same, now
she just would like
to dry off—
burrow into soil.

After a Miscarriage

This green-house, all
humidity and buzzing, chock-full
wheelbarrows brimming
torments of manure's
unshakeoffable grasp. Pollen

Autumn 2008

Summer 2008

Spring/Summer 2008

Winter/Spring 2008

Editor's Note

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explodes. Tiger bumblebees nudge
pale blossoms, silent bells
swaying, calling, meanwhile
a toddler waddles—trips—
trips—flagstone
cracks a chasm for bare toes
his heaving patterns
regular persistent
Venus flytraps clapping shut, then
open. Chances beckon—choke
myself with “could-haves”—bite
my tongue with “what-ifs”—
(help him stand? pick up
his G.I. Joe doll?)

He leaves me
risking my intentions—
waves from afar.

Domenic Scopa is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and the 2014 recipient of the Robert K. Johnson Poetry Prize and Garvin Tate Merit Scholarship. He is a student of the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA Program, where he studies poetry and translation, and he is a literature professor at Changing Lives Through Literature. His poetry and translations have been featured nationally and internationally in *Poetry Quarterly*, *Belleville Park Pages*, *Visions International*, *Cardinal Sins*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Poetry Pacific*, and many others. He resides in Boston.

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