

Home

Spring 2010

Winter 2010

Autumn 2009

Summer 2009

Spring 2009

Autumn 2008

Summer 2008

Spring/Summer
2008

Winter/Spring
2008

Editor's Note

Guidelines

Contact

A Poem: Looking at You

by Curt Eriksen

I sit down and I never know where to go—
this morning I saw you for the first time.
You wouldn't keep still.

"Very active," sang the chorus.
And I thought, these are useful people
these, not like my kind, the vague kind,
the sleepwalkers who dream on their feet
with their nose in a corner.

You wouldn't stay still
so they fastened two belts about your mother's belly
and tried to listen again.

The static was your jabs, punches, kicks
and the amplified mono beat
your heart,
which I saw in its cage,
a black bud pulsing.

That was the first time I ever saw you—
the doctor traced the outline of your fragile spine,
indicated your head.

The dark areas were the medium,
some of which had spilled down your mother's leg
during the night.

Afterwards she looked at me with dreamy blue eyes
and begged to know how it had felt.

"Was it beautiful?"

She told me again that the first time she saw you she cried
and I told her that I knew that,
I already knew that she cried the first time she saw you.

And me, what did I do?

I just looked at you.

I couldn't do anything but look.

Curt Eriksen, born in Manhattan, KS, left the States with an MA in Developmental Economics and Comparative Systems and returned to Madrid, where he had studied as an undergraduate, via an internship with the State Department in Liberia, West Africa. He now lives with his family on a plot of land that he continues to improve in the Sierra de Gredos. During the past four years Curt's short fiction and poetry have appeared in the U.S., U.K., India and Spain—in *Blackbird*, *Rosebud*, *New Madrid*, *Ghoti*, *34th Parallel*, *Contrary*, *Pindeldyboz*, *42opus* and *Alba*, among many other print and online journals. More work is forthcoming soon in *Anemone Sidecar*, *The Citron Review*, *Orbis*, Sam Smith's *The Journal* and *Mad Hatters' Review*. Curt's work is accessible at www.clerik.weebly.com.

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