

[Home](#)

[Summer 2010](#)

[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](#)

Three Poems

by Kelley White

Definitely Purple

I tried 'feminist' but it sounded pastel and pale-
-d down as in
"feminine products"

I knew big women who stood
with heavy wide legs
on the bare earth

my grandmother, her sisters, my mother, hers
anyway you break it down I grew up
in a poor town and
I live in a poor town now

Democratic Katie

Don't you love New Hampshire
Politics—it's Live Free or Die
so my daughter slaps a Kerry
bumpersticker on the car even
though I know we hate people
from Massachusetts and I'm not
sure if it's good or bad Kerry
that it's next to my "no war
for oil" sticker, and she grabs
a sign to march in the Old Home
Day Parade for any candidate
so long as he's not republican.

Derailed

Please, not another trainwreck this morning. My morning coffee's
in my ear. It buzzes like cream, it sizzles like a snake on melting
tar. You can taste that boiling sunrise on the windshield of your
car. Humbert used to ride the rails, from Omaha to Santa Fe. I
forgot to make my coffee. Left it home on the shelf. You keep it
in the refrigerator. I keep it a can marked "Stealth." We were
supposed to split the bills but you never have a dime in your
pants. You used to have a wad of twenties. I think you hid them
in a drawer. Give me nuttin' but a case quarter. You know you
owe me more. And take that ink pen off the floor. Ink's an awful
thing to fight with, but its better than a sword. She dipped her nib
at the Holy Fountain, the Red Ink Fountain of Righteousness.
She used her blood as invisible ink. Hold her up to a match and
you'd read the bruises. She wore a dozen bracelets spiked with

barbed wire and carpet tacks. Baby Doc, you'd better stop lecturing the choir. Next week they'll go to Disney World and leave you holding the door. It's that melting door of bees wax. We've both been there before. I knew the barfly at Bellevue. I don't go there anymore. I go to Buena Vista. The breezes there sing Wundabar. You can take the train from China. Drink steamed milk with tea in the dining car.

Inner-city Philadelphia pediatrician **Kelley White** has returned New Hampshire to work at a rural health center. Her poems have been widely published, in journals including *Exquisite Corpse*, *Rattle* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and in chapbooks and books, most recently *Toxic Environment* (Boston Poet Press) and *Two Birds in Flame*, poems related to the Shakers in New Hampshire (Beech River Books). She received a 2008 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant and is a member of Germantown Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Copyright 2011, Kelley White. © This work is protected under the U.S. copyright laws. It may not be reproduced, reprinted, reused, or altered without the expressed written permission of the author.