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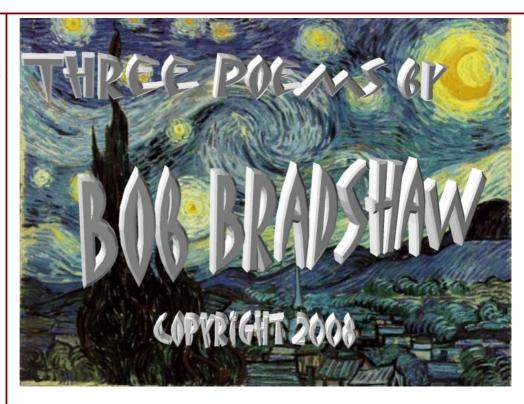
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Contact



## **Jail Time**

Here's the scoundrel, my father said. He was in my shed smoking. I've got gasoline cans in there. The police sergeant looked at me with eyes grey as gun barrels. I was nine. My father had already taken a switch to me. This way, boy, the sergeant said.

"Ok, son, this is your home for the next few years."
The cell's closing door rang like stones dropped into a metal bucket.
"You'll be a man when your father comes to retrieve you," he said. I burst into tears. My father begged the sergeant to give me one more chance. He relented and I went home as somber as a stone. I never lit a cigarette again.

## **An Aging Bachelor**

I'm 52, and the attractive women have been harvested.

What have I got to offer the few stragglers who are the single scene?

My scalp is receding. My nose wanders like a fence in sand.

I have a sympathetic ear, and my pockets empty for my friends faster than outpourings of advice.

"What girl wants that kind of man?
A woman wants security," the widow Lucy says.
"Not someone digging under cushions for rent money.

Why are you angry? I ask. "I'm not," she says and storms off.

What was that about,

I wonder.

## **Her Scent**

Always there is the hint of perfume on his shirts, lining the pockets of his coats. The same brunette hair clinging to his sleeves.

But after all some things one picks up innocently. Like the scents of Passion flowers fawned off on you by the wind's quick hands.

Or the scent of a cigarette from the bloke next to you at a watering hole who disappears into his drink

and leaves his smoke on your clothing.

Maybe the other woman no one speaks of will drift away, become no more than a dusting of snow in the air.

Maybe tomorrow you won't harbor the suspicion that the underwear you slip on carries

her scent, the scent of wet leaves

that cling disgustedly

to you

**Bob Bradshaw** is a programmer living in Redwood City, CA, with his wife, his punk rock son, and their schizophrenic cat. His poems appeared recently in *Eclectica, Umbrella, Blue Fifth Review, Slow Trains, Orange Room Review, Flutter, Poems Niederngasse* and Cha.