

October Virginia

By: Chatell Barnhill

You came back to
me on the night
the deer gently picked
at cold dead grass
silently moving along
open land hidden by its
grace.

Your hand was dry
and soft on the
small of my back
fingertips leaving
a trail of apologies
up my thigh.

You tasted sweet and
tangy like your favorite
thick beer and I
wondered if
Fat Tire gave you
the courage to
split open my night.

You felt like smooth
stones skipping down
my spine and digging
into the sodden ground.
You felt like the sun
biting my skin, leaving
marks of frustration.
You felt like perfectly
shaped mounds of
discarded dust;
like a murky creek or
wordy expression.
You felt like winter's shapeless
embrace; like thick snow
framing jagged rocks.
You felt like blood soaked
fur caked with dirt
or clumps of wet sand
on the weathered porch.

You felt like salt water
taffy on the blue
wheel and red leaves
stuck to muddy boots.
You felt like a misty
morning over a
mouthful of black coffee
or crushed
lilies in cold milk.
You felt like the orange
moon over weary trees; like
my back against a frosted fence.

I took you back the
moment I saw the
deer's eyes
glisten like onyx
embedded in dirt.

We walked along
the Moon Lit path
listening for the
movements of gentle
wild things trapped
beneath their fear.

You pulled my arm
leading me to the
house with
dust windows
and missing steps.

We stood on the
porch and
drank stolen brandy
passing the bottle back
and forth.

I rubbed my tongue
along its rim tasting
your lips.

The shadows watched.

We descended into the
trees.

You spoke of our future
as if it played before
your eyes.

I saw a Doe in the
distance as you buried
your face in my neck.

She sipped from a
shallow creek
as you kissed my ear.

Your hands were cold
but the inside of your
mouth was hot.

We glowed like fire
kept in a jar

and when you pulled me
down onto you the Doe
disappeared into the brush.