

2004

Ashes

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Recommended Citation

Buda, Robin (2004) "Ashes," *The Angle*: Vol. 2005: Iss. 2, Article 16.
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2005/iss2/16>

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Ashes

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Everything begins to be better once she takes a deep breath. A smile creeps over her face. She sees the sky's pastel colors dancing before her eyes. The sun begins to creep from behind the mountain. She sprinkles the rest of the ashes and heads for her SUV."

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: Volume 5, Issue 2, 2004.

ROBIN BUDA

ASHES

Everything begins to be better once she takes a deep breath. A smile creeps over her face. She sees the sky's pastel colors dancing before her eyes. The sun begins to creep from behind the mountain. She sprinkles the rest of the ashes and heads for her SUV.

Smack. "Don't talk back to me. Who told you to voice your opinion?" She could feel the side of her face flair up. An immediate sensation of pain mixed with numbness violently spread across her cheekbone. He always knew where to hit her so it felt like her eyes were going to explode.

He left the room, grabbed his briefcase and stormed out of the house, slamming the front door on his way, causing her mother's vase to fall off the shelf and shatter on the hard wood floor below it. Her eyes began to water as she mechanically stands up and begins cleaning the mess her husband has left behind. She is always cleaning up his messes.

Broken vases, broken glasses, broken everything. Dirty dishes and dirty sheets from his adulterous actions when she is busy caring for their kids. She is tired of cleaning up after him. She is tired of making excuses for him. She is tired.

Their kids are at their after school soccer and football practices when he comes home from work early. He complains about dinner not being ready as he takes off his dirty shoes and places his feet on the table. He complains about how his car has broken down and he had to walk the rest of the way home.

He demands his highball and, like a good wife, she retreats to get it. When she returns, he hasn't stopped complaining about her. How fat she has gotten since her last pregnancy, how horrible her cooking has gotten, how bad the sex is. As he criticized her further, the buzzer for the oven goes off.

That's the only sound she can hear as she walks over to her husband with his back turned to her. She can see the bald spot gleaming back at her from the top of his head. The mole on his ear taunts her with its dancing hair. His neck rolls overflow at the top of his sweater that he is busting out of. His hairy butt crack looms out of his tight khaki pants as well. Her mind goes blank as she repeatedly bashes him over the head with the glass. She keeps hitting until he slumps over in the chair and falls to the side. She keeps hitting.

She washes the glass and places it back with the others. She begins cleaning the pools of blood from around him. Always cleaning. She goes out back and starts up the fire pit. When the flames are nice and big, she drags his body outside and throws it on the dancing flames. Then she watches as his body melts into nothingness. When the job is complete, she extinguishes the fire and gathers the ashes. She cleans up the pit and goes back inside to finish dinner.