Sixth and Second

Meghan Prichard
St. John Fisher College

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Cover Page Footnote

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AFFECTION
BY NIKI GAULIN

Soft kisses upon my brow
wet, cool, and pure,
like dipping my fingers in
semi-sweet chocolate icing
as if I were eight again.
The chilling caress of the rain
brushes over my ripened cheeks
soaking my ruddy-blonde hair,
and drips like a loose faucet
off of my nose and over my lips.
Trickles to showers
as I stand colder than bedsheets
not slept in,
waiting for nothing but
everything at once.
Droplets of cloud borne rain
stick to my eyelashes
like and old lover’s lingering kiss.
I feel safe and wanted
under the shower of this
undaunted affection.
Yet rain—cold, unforgiving, miserable,
like love can be—
reminds me that sometimes I am
only human.

SIXTH AND SECOND
BY MEGHAN PRICHARD

In the corners of every crease I can see it.
When you say,
"I'm done. That's it. Go. Come back. Say you'll never leave."
So I stepped onto the corner
Of Sixth and Second Street,
Said what I meant
Without the poignancy.
But I knew,
Making plans would ruin this
I wish you saw, what I can always see.

I started humming
Pushing keys through lips
On tiles white and green.
And it's the saddest song I ever sang.
The saddest song I could never really sing.
I walked down to McGregor's:
The last bar without a cover.
The boys here
Will all be sick when morning comes.
The girls, hurling,
Crying for their cotton colored mothers.
I'll be wasted on my front stoop—
Too exposed for chicken soup or my father's lemon tea.
You'll be somewhere sleeping.
A bed, eight pillows, four blankets
Everything you need.
Everything but me.
On our way home
I gave my cell to Sara.
If it were up to me, I'd call 'til I couldn't.
Until my face and hands are clouds.
If you say you mean, I'll believe it.
Confess a quiet conscience
That under liquor, comes out loud.

I've been here for an hour.
It could be three or four a.m.
I should never drink alone like this.
But you're not here
To tell me when...

I should stop.
I should count.
I should quit while I'm behind.
Someone just to say,
"When I get old, I'm gonna miss you all the time."

You didn't ask me
so I didn't tell you
that I went to pawn my wedding bands
and a little golden medallion
and they had no value
not even $20
that's about the same in Euros
or 600 Dominican pesos
which sounds a bit better
but still they're nothing but
worthless pieces of bronze.

Because you didn't ask me
I didn't tell you
that I was six months behind
in child support
and they were going to take away
my driver's license
how stupid is that
since if I can't get to work
they can't get any more money
like blood out of a stone
and even stupider
if they were going to put me in jail
because then nobody would ever see any money
ever again.

Because you didn't ask me
I didn't tell you
that my son will grow up
to marry a size six airbrushed beauty
and she'll end up in the slim woman's harem
bingeing and purging
until he has to put her in her plain white shroud
into the ground
with a flat headstone
wouldn't it be better to buy
a blow-up doll instead?