

# SMOKE

*by* barry graham

And so it begins, like this, waiting too long for a lazy train out of West Toledo. Sugar white smoke ascends from the broken window of a nearby tool shed. On the concrete platform couples embrace, preparing to go their separate ways, pretending next time they meet they will pull out a map and choose a place, Ann Arbor or Los Angeles or Atlantic City, and that's where they'll belong, where they'll build a life and live happy, forever, like Shrek and Fiona or sharks or birthday party magic they no longer believe in. And why should they. The train hasn't left yet, but they both look eagerly towards the tracks, anticipating its departure.

