

The Answer Man

by Carl Santoro

I heard the phone ring.
Downstairs Mom picked it up
from the kitchen wall unit.

Mom was crying.
She held the phone receiver
to her ear. I could here her slam
her back flat against the kitchen wall.

She wailed out,
"Don't call me anymore!"

It was my father.

Her body slid
down the wall
onto the cold floor.
Her legs splayed out
in front of her.
She was a mess of
tears and screams,
unable to breath normally.

The separation
was not
going well.

This was the
third episode this week
like this.

I ran downstairs.

It was time
to be firm
with both of them.
I wrested the receiver
from her tight grip.

"Dad, don't call here anymore.
Your calls get Mom too upset.
I don't want you to hurt
Mom again.
DO NOT CALL HERE AGAIN."

The answer man was
a boy of 17.
The answer man
had no answers.
Only questions.

