

# 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.

