

# noise

by Glynnis Eldridge

I am naked in an upright glass box with water running through my hair and over my skin. I am in there when the old man who invited himself into our house for six long months (because no one had the nerve to tell him to leave) opens a door and stands across from me and tells me something about a dinner he didn't cook but wants to shovel into his mouth is waiting on a table for me and him and everyone, or maybe he says none of this. He looks at me, looks at me, looks at me and then leaves. The water is off and I open my eyes and day light savings time is over and it's bright in your old friend/new boyfriend's room and you say SHIT I FORGOT I HAVE CLASS TODAY and the red numbers on the digiclock say eight and you think seven and you close your eyes again and then you are pushed out of bed and are running down the stairs without pants on. You take your shirt off to get in the water. The steam fills the bathroom. It is thirty degrees outside. The heat is good: your fingers prune and your thick soles nearly peel off. You can't see your feet through the heat fog. Last night a fog machine in front of you set off two smoke detectors at your friends' basement noise show. The beeping interrupted someone's fake screams into an expensive microphone. You were sitting on an armchair with your old friend/new boyfriend when you saw that familiar face, a name you can't remember, maybe it isn't someone you know, maybe it is: you look at them and they look at you and you know who they are and you stop smiling. They were the one who played offbeat percussion in your ex's band, your ex who you haven't seen since May, who you broke up with in June, broke up with again in July, and August. At the noise show you find someone's Darth Vader mask and you put it on and parade around with a new loud personality and an empty coffee mug decorated with a painting of Oreos. You run into the offbeat percussionist in the kitchen and see them sneering at you in what might now be your rightful place: an evil person's face where yours used to be. When you take the mask off they have left the room.

