

Everything I Have Is Broken

by Kyle Hemmings

i tell her that my pots and pans have scratches that never come out. My mother's old china no longer reflects. Its value is now estimated as drywall. The coffee maker can't process java. It doesn't heat-- just gurgles and dies. It dies each morning. The toilet needs some artful juggling. Yet, despite all of it, she likes me because of my smile that reminds her of HIM, who was yesterday. She says that whenever there is steel against sky there is the possibility of love, rebellious as The Garbage Heads who play Nu-Metal on East Second. She loves the smell of old bridges after a rain. i remind her how the neighborhood is going downhill, how at night there is the sound of cockroaches imitating humans making sex sounds with clenched jaws. The cockroaches go and die somewhere else. Still she insists she won't leave without a flag. You're the one, she exclaims wordlessly. i can read it in her yesterday eyes that were once bluer. She still believes i could be HIM, if i could just polish my act. i keep telling her that i'm today with no future; my apartment is only walls and punched-in holes. i keep telling her that i'm a veteran of three wars and we're still losing Avenue C to the bankers from gangrenous side-streets. i tell her I'm out of insecticide. i'm shaking an empty can. She doesn't care about that.

