

# Smoker

*by* Lara Brown

I inhale the smoke from a burning cigarette  
held between two stained fingers that are not mine.  
I am talking to a boy too cheap to offer me more  
than just the one toke.  
His fingers are not those of a guitarist,  
though he tells me otherwise.  
He tells other lies, too,  
and I pretend to believe him,  
ignoring the plump look of youth about him,  
and agreeing with every word he says.  
He sips vodka from a flask and winces,  
trying hard to disguise his distaste for this,  
Whilst I suckle at the flask like a child on a breast,  
swallowing with the same ease as you might  
water from a tap.  
I ask him, again, for a smoke  
and again, he says no, yet, again, holds out his fingers,  
and expects me to toke, dependent on him.  
And I do, because it's all I can do.

