

# Truthful Possum

*by* Shawn Misener

There's a talking possum sitting crosslegged at the top of the stairs, the light from the purple and green stained-glass window above cloaking him in peaceful hues.

"You will never love yourself. You are condemned to loathing all of your parts, no matter how glorious they may be. Look at your legs! They tremble, like twigs on a washing machine. Look at your eyes! They seek to deceive. Look at your teeth! They are better served as gambler's bones."

I look down at my chest, an open window. The lines are clean, no blood, no sign of a sternum.

"Look at your heart! It is nothing but a plastic mold. Your life is a reproduction of a reproduction. One in a line of millions!"

The possum is sneering with truth. I can smell the blood under his fingernails. He has seen it all, the backwoods distilleries and the back porch propane grilles. He has slept under the beds of whores and kings alike.

I remove my heart after struggling with the packaging. "Take it then," I gasp, underhanding it up the stairs. It bounces nonchalantly off his skull as he slips into meditation.

