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Seth Berg

When the wind...

I.

All that remained was the rabbit, the one-eyed, cancerous rabbit who was as happy as a maggot in a shitstorm. No more Laundromat. No more nickel arcade. No more old-man-chewing-on-a-wooden-match sitting on the corner. Just that slow rabbit nostriling his cycloptic way down the shrapneled street.

II.

They lie. It sounds nothing at all like a freight train. As a matter of fact, it doesn't sound like an object at all. I had heard the folklore: a piece of straw piercing a telephone pole, livestock decapitated by whizzing license plates, persons being vacuumed up and regaining consciousness miles from their last memory. It sounds like all of that crammed into the darkest part of your core. It sounds like a brigade of grim reapers shrieking, swallowing, vomiting.

III.

When I was five years old I wanted a pet rabbit. I liked the twitching of their noses, the perfect spheres of their droppings... Now I just want my wife back.

At the Bar

When the robot drinks,
she hungers for salads
made of scrap metal and wire,
professes her undying love
for the pinball machine.
I show her the fillings in my teeth,
the scars patch-working my surface area,
and she gets all hot and bothered,
realizes I,
too am modified,
my body nowhere near its origin.
I buy her another snifter full of brandy.
She swirls it and mumbles something
about digital versus analog,
says she loves the linearity
of my whiskered jaw,
the right angles of my bottom teeth.
When I tell her that I had braces
in middle school, she digs
her bot-fingers into the back of my skull,
kisses me hard on the face,
and says that she wants to fuck me until the end of pi.

Aphasia

Ever since my wheelchair
I've been eating these placebos
opalescent when I was a young man
and sometimes too large for my gag reflex
now the nurse brings me tea and exotic fruits
chamomile and papaya
all I can do is raise my slow thumb
and repeat the phrase "pretty good"
because pretty good is universal
and the nurse will never know
that inside this crippled head
is an architect waiting
to replace the severed sky

Seth Berg received his MFA in poetry from Bowling Green State University in 2003. He lives in Minneapolis where he is assistant professor of poetics and eco-architecture at Vesper College. Recent poems can be found in Connecticut Review, Lake Effect, Chiron Review, Stitches, JMWW, and 13th Warrior Review. Seth has an English Bulldog named Bob and a punk photographer fiancé named Ashley.