

BRICE LORY

## Autumn in the Fields

Autumn arrives in the fields  
with wrinkling puddles in mud  
as the air howls,  
and skeleton stalks rattle and shake,  
brown and gold and dry,  
with the glass-pane terror  
of old age.

Autumn arrives in the fields  
with towers of sawtooth  
sabres shooting out in symphonies  
of discord, of disharmony, of dissonance  
and disquiet,  
as stained-glass concertos  
shatter to the ground in  
seas of rustling and musty breath.  
Autumn arrives with the thresher,  
Blades spinning and clicking –  
a great insect creeping across  
mires that stink of cattle.

And those that work set their mouths  
straight; their eyes slow, sharp, steel.  
They all nod in agreement –  
the quiet understanding of the slow fury  
of the harvest, the reaping;  
frost comes with starving and merciless  
fingers, sharp needle-teeth.  
And the stink will fade; and night  
will stumble in drunk screaming of discord, of  
disharmony, of dissonance and disquiet.  
the wind will chant, and the men will nod, knowing  
that the reedy voice screaming across the fields  
is the summoning, the ritual of shivering bones  
in un-dug graves; that  
you, winter, you will kill.

BRENDEN WEST

## Band-Aids

*third place, CU writing contest*

One day, at school, a boy pulled my hair and I cried and told my teacher, Ms. B. She put him in timeout. My daddy said sometimes boys and girls hurt each other because they like each other. I said, “Ew,” and stuck my tongue out.

Even though my daddy’s a boy, I like him. He’s the only boy who ever plays Barbies with me. He makes his voice really high like a girl when we’re playing pretend. I named my Barbie Molly because my name is Molly. He named his Barbie Owen.

“You can’t do that!” I said.

Daddy said, “Why?”

“Because Owen is a *boy’s* name!”

He said *someone* already stole his favorite name.

\*

I started school in August. My dad drops me off every morning and picks me up every day. One day my teacher asked, “How come your dad picks you up from school every day?” She’s pretty.

“He can’t wait for me to tell him everything I did today.”

“How come your mom never picks you up from school?”

“My mom is in heaven,” I said. “So she can’t pick me up from school.”

My teacher nodded her head. She grabbed my Barbie and said it was very pretty. I said her name was Molly, after me.

She gave me a note, one time, and said, “Can you give this to your dad, and promise not to read it?”

I nodded my head, but I opened the note the second she turned her back. It was pink. It smelled nice. It had lots of pretty flowers. I tried to read it, but I haven’t learned cursive yet.