

Wag's Revue is proud to announce the winner of its 2009 Winter Contests in Poetry, ENGRAM WILKINSON. The simple appearance and directness of voice in his work is deceptive—Engram's poems have a remarkable dream-logic to them. His domestic scenes and observations on love, which border on precious or saccharine, then tumble into the imaginary of 'monsters' and 'conceived geometry' with the grace of a sleepwalking gymnast.

—Will Guzzardi
Poetry Editor

Neighbors

In the silence of love being made on the opposite side of our red brick wall I hold your hand: *Para ser libre es a menudo para estar solo*. We look together at a copy of *National Geographic*; there are images of wars and children. We close the magazine and look at each other. We both know the iconography of death has taken a new turn: when we kiss there is always a new fruit to slice. Tell me this isn't true, tell me that we'll grow up and be somebody's neighbors. Tell me that we'll be a monster; a faceless, noise-making monster that everyone will judge. I want to make noises. I want to peel oranges with my teeth, my hands to be covered in acrid citrus juice. You're looking at the table—you disagree.



Invalid Geography

In my childhood I was raised in the Appalachian Mountains; I was taught how to work with a hunting knife, which is to say I always approach problems from below, working upwards. After sex, people are curious—we ask questions. I reply and ask my own question, *could you kill another human?* Tonight you're answering with silence; we have been fighting and there is no winner. Against your weary flesh I become a logician—If the sheet is an ocean then we can walk on water. If we can see the ocean we must be home. It does not follow that you are my house. You are pregnant, your body a sprawling, solitary mountain. In the small of your back I feel you shiver. *Cold should be connected to the ground.*



Returning to Sender

You're a box, a cardboard box with edges dressed in scabs of masking tape and postage stickers. I cut into your flesh because I have been mailed a package. Inside I find a dozen white roses: someone somewhere is in love because the rose petals have been written on, each saying *I love*—they are unfinished, but the meaning is clear, spelled out in blue ink: someone forced you to eat flowers. I want to write back, want to carve into your flesh a series of postcards: *Do you know why I smoke? My first attempt at suicide failed. I like slow things. I must learn how to empathize.* The cardboard is callous and resists my efforts to be honest: I try to write a reply but my hand is shaking. I am left with no choice: I shower, place you in the passenger seat and drive to the post office. The postman places you onto the scales. He covers your eye with a stamp.



Wag's Revue
Fake You

When you see a body you see a history. – Louise Gluck

On my ankle I have written an abecedarian sequence where A is “love” and you are B. I cannot show you my body: this is a major thoroughfare and there are simply too many people. After showering I wrote the poem on myself in permanent marker, my flesh eager to receive meaning. After your quiet leaving I sat at my table, watched the sunrise and conceived geometry, created new forms as a religion I could follow. It follows from the idea of the circle that there can exist four angles, our bisecting legs splayed out creating an invisible zero. Your arm cuts across my stomach—my stomach, not my chest—and you have made for my body a supplement. It tickles; I flail about. In the silence of passing people and their fragmentary conversations you reach out and there is the proof: if we occupy three dimensions then I am cubed, a form complete with edges.