

Marlboro Reds

Thomas McNeil

I gave up smoking this year.
I am returning to purity, serenity,
reborn as the final cigarette
is engulfed, enraged, extinguished.

No more for me the ashy asses,
confetti sprinkles of white and gray
onto the floor of my green Corolla
littered with empty Red Bull cans.

Wondering what to do on rainy days,
when I run away and hide.
Blasting The Smiths feels dull,
and I find myself alone, never dry.

Missing that gross aftertaste
while I console myself smokeless,
hands searching for tangibility,
eating Mamba fruit chews and a Slim Jim.

I still find brown, burnt butts on my floor,
cloth seats covered in holes, stained by ash,
when I'm crying and alone like a kid,
needing semblance of something that lasts.

Two fingers feeling empty when I'm stressed,
even worse when it all goes back to shit.
No more for me the sad days, I say,
with my clothes stinky, feeling like trash.

I am returning to impurity, pollution,
jaded and unforgiving,
reborn as her kid,
inner child anxious, agitated, aimless.

And I see she's a kid too,
sitting in the garage with a cigarette.