

CARRIE PIEPER

## (waiting)

silence  
like nothing you've  
ever heard  
interrupting every  
thought  
pacing around the  
room  
waiting  
for a break

in the silence  
fingers go  
numb  
pounding on  
soundproof  
walls  
with nothing  
on the other side

silence  
lies on  
an empty  
bed  
so still  
and quiet  
it may as  
well not  
be there  
at all

then all at once  
silence breaks  
a tiny bell fills the air  
the voice of a savior

dead legs given life  
a body leaping to  
the ring in the air

but what  
has begun  
is just as  
soon over

an answer  
to an unasked  
question  
permeates  
the room

everything  
goes quiet  
again  
air thick  
and noiseless  
as fog

then  
a corpse  
falls  
down  
without a  
sound  
and silence  
caresses  
fresh bruises  
stamped  
dark blue  
across pale  
white skin.

GREG WHITE

## My Broken Television is a Metaphor

I'm not suicidal, but I've been going through the motions, and that might be just as bad. I don't love my wife. I doubt I ever did. But we got married because we were at the age when people should get married. We don't have any kids, thank god. We rarely have sex and when we do, it's a pale imitation of what sex should be. We're just two relatively out of shape people rubbing up against one another, grunting rhythmically to make our partner believe it feels great, all the while picturing someone better, or mentally balancing the checkbook. During sex, our shadows look like they have early onset diabetes. I'm fat. Not fat, but flabby. It's horrible. When we orgasm, our bodies convulse and we lay down, our sides slouching with the excess weight of our late 30s. Nobody says anything. It's a routine, a chore, no more enriching or depleting than taking out the garbage. It's terrible.

Our marriage was never the most romantic or fiery of partnerships. We met at a get-together and it was a relationship of convenience from the start. She was willing to sleep with me regularly. I was willing to let her dictate the décor of my home. It got to the point where we either needed to get married or end the damn thing, so we got married. What pushed it over the edge was my need for health insurance. It made financial sense. Nothing big, just a trip to the courthouse and dinner with family and friends. Over time, any of the convenience disappeared and was replaced with a hefty dose of resentment. I resented the fact that she never cleaned up the messes she made, she resented everything I did. We've mostly stopped talking altogether.

The last few weeks, she looks less plump than me. Her New Year's Resolution was to lose weight, get in shape, reignite our marriage, and have a happy life. That's what she resolved for both of us. I watch TV