

TRANSVESTITE

Roxane Barwick, Scottsdale Community College
Honorable Mention, Poetry

My father was a fireman,
Almost.
He drove a battered, white pickup
Through a faraway town.
Hustling.
I am invited,
Once.
But I must wait in the truck
While he works.
Chemicals used to refill fire extinguishers
Fight with air for space in my lungs.
I roll the window down,
Allowing lilac infused air to swirl inside.
I dial through the time machine;
Supremes, Beatles, Eagles,
I choose an era and sing along,
I look at the mirror,
Ginger hair, blue eyes, freckles,
I look into the mirror,
Anxious, cheerless, alone,
I maneuver into his seat,
Drive to nowhere
And clamber back into mine.
I push in the cigarette lighter,
Startle when it pops out and
Absently watch as it turns from orange to red to black
Like a dying sun.
I open the glove box,
Find no gloves, but a white lace negligee
Cascades into my unsuspecting lap
Like a Persian cat seeking affection.
The mirror reflects
Confusion, my mother is too modest to wear it,
Suspicion, could there be another woman?
"Stay out of *my* stuff," he shouts
When he discovers me
With his secret on my lap.
But he lets me keep it,
From everyone.