
Poetry | SPRING 2017

Palliation

By Sarah Shirley

Damn it Rosy, dry your eyes
and then come dry mine too,
wipe these fat tears away
from my tired skin, because
I am not dead yet, and neither
are you. Let's think about the
time we lived in the bungalow
with the window that leaked
in the weakest of showers,
the time that we lived in that
constant state of sleep deprivation
while the twins went through
colic and teething,
then driving and leaving,
the time that we drove through
France in the spring,
on tires that weren't fit for the road.

I wish I could lift these twitching
arms to hold you Rosy –
they're useless to me now,
but it doesn't take away
the time they lifted you over
the slippery rocks of the creek
behind the house, the times they
rocked the squalling babies to sleep,
and all the other things
they fixed and moved and carried
when I was young and whole.

Come now Rosy, darling Rosy,
ignored through cricket and rugby
seasons, but stuck with me for
whatever reason, and to end up with what?

An ugly wrinkled life-sized man doll –
change his nappy, cries real tears?
But here we are at this ending, this
last goodbye, as my timer ticks down
and soon you will leave this dim room,
and step out into bright light.
It'll burn for a bit I expect, Rosy,
make you wince, shy away,
but soon the pain will go,
and then you can go - gather yourself up
and walk back into the world, Rosy,
and occasionally think about me.

Sarah Shirley lives in Hamilton, New Zealand with her husband and two young children. She previously worked as a molecular biologist, and is now in her final year of medical school. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *star*line*, *takahe Magazine*, *Poetry New Zealand Yearbook 2017*, *Atlas*, *Ars Medica*, and *Pedestal*.

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