Rooms (Re)Visited

Megan E. Hilands
Gettysburg College, meganhilands@gmail.com
Class of 2012

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Keywords
creative writing, poetry

Author Bio
Megan Hilands is a junior from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, majoring in English with a Writing Concentration and Music. She is a violinist and participates in various ensembles in the Sunderman Conservatory of Music. Megan is also currently spending the semester studying in Vienna, Austria.

This poetry is available in The Mercury: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2011/iss1/22
ROOMS (RE)VISITED

MEGAN HILANDS

A child’s room is a drive-thru of youth,
a box of memories
where seashells glued to paper are prized
artwork and a plastic Snow White cup sits
on the night table.

Here are the same soft white curtains whose billows
become phantoms without light.
Curtains were the first true terror of my youth;
they coiled my veins into spirals even tighter
than my mom’s 80’s perm.

I once read a story about how in India people believe
death comes
as a dark wimpled woman,
and I saw her ghastly hump
on the midnight walls for months.

Toys and trinkets never help us
glimpse the truth.
If I could imagine what this girl is like
from her room,
I’d picture her wearing
soccer cleats
while riding a horse
with twenty-six pet turtles trailing behind.

In 1993, my room spelled my name
in misshapen ballet slippers
though I never danced.

I wonder what she thinks
in evening’s slow drawl.
In childhood my thoughts turned to God,
my prayers as pure as the ice crystals that danced
on my winter windows.

I caught thought demons in Jesus-fish style nets, and used them as trampolines to climb towards heaven, Catholic school girl style, singing with the crickets and God, yet I closed my eyes humming Disney.