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The Dish-Doer

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The Dish-Doer

Author Bio

Cyndy Basil is a junior majoring in English with a Writing Concentration and Art History. She is co-president of Artem and an attendant at Schmucker Art Gallery. Her goal is to always be surrounded by and working with art.

The Dish-Doer

CYNDY BASIL

The wheels of the vacuum leave even tracks in the carpet,
rows of a garden in which she plants bulbs
to sprout, flower, and die.

A living room philosopher,
within the confines of her domestic sphere,
she watches her thoughts bloom and wilt.

At the sink, in battle with a stain like the rings of Saturn on a coffee mug the
front line of yesterday's teardrops slip between her fingers,
scalded by blistering water (because hot water kills more germs, don't you
know?).

Her mind wanders to her mother,
whose hands were impossibly accustomed to
the brimstone heat.

She asks herself to where it was
her mother's mind traveled
as she checked off to-do items
with the immediate efficiency
of an exploding star.

She knew exactly where her own thoughts ran to
when plied with enough laundry in need of folding.

She imagines a life, not without dishes,
but one where chores are interrupted
by the embrace of arms
strong enough to crush the fear
that her only company may ever be
the sting of lemon tainted bleach in her nostrils.

Of this escape, she is mildly ashamed.
Her defenses against loneliness
and the tempting dream of domestic bliss,
remind her much

of spring frost
that, in one night,
encases the world in ice
and thaws by breakfast -
eaten opposite an empty chair.
She asks herself
if God felt
lonely
as he watched
Adam entwine
with the rib
he plucked and molded
into the perfect partner;
if He too,
was a vicarious voyeur
keeping company
with His
creations.

For now, she ponders,
and finds comfort in the knowledge
that vinegar and baking soda,
will remove almost any stain
and that the housework is never done.
She is reminded why it is
cleanliness is close to godliness,
as dust spins in the chamber of the vacuum
like galactic debris
caught in the gravitational pull
of the world she's created.