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## Untrue to Form

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# Untrue to Form

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**Author Bio**

Lauren Barrett, a sophomore, is an English and Environmental Studies major. She is a member of Peace Club and the Gettysburg Recreational Adventure Board, and enjoys spending time in the outdoors, rock climbing, and reading works of fiction and poetry. She hopes to travel abroad in the fall to Ireland where she can continue to study literature and writing.

It hurts to remember seeing two corpses painted and injected with chemicals so that they could be displayed as continuations of the people that I know would have laid their own lives down for me.

\* \* \* \*

Death cannot be blamed. We alone have the ability to misshape our loved one's in our minds.

Through her death, my Grandma finally broke free of the dementia that had contorted her into a foreigner in my family's midst. She and my Aunt Virginia were revived through death, so that when shown their corpses, all I could think to myself was, "What a fucked up world."

\* \* \* \*

Death, though natural and in its own way beautiful, is a sneaky culprit.

One day, I am watching a skunk waddle into the woods; a week later, the skunk is curled up dead in a trunk of a tree. Its nutrients and atoms have begun to recycle into the Earth, but the skunk that waddled is now only existent in my memory.

Alive one day and dead the next without reason and without company. The skunk, the squirrel, the pigeon, my Great Aunt Virginia, and my Grandma all swim to the surface of my mind. Their expressions, their eyes closing, and their last panting breaths. But I also have the ability to compare these grim images to those newly invigorated memories and realize that death has brought me to rekindle love's flame for them in every instance. Even a memory of being scolded by my Grandma or hearing her say, "Shit!" makes me smile and know that they all were zealously appreciative of life. I remember them breathing and I feel myself breathe knowing that we are still connected.

The only painful mystery that still lingers is the wondering of why my family wanted to turn my relatives' corpses into Barbie-doll shrines. Now, there will always be this blemish on the memory of my dead family members, caked on and weighted down with layer after layer of blush.

Despite the lack of ceremony around the dead squirrel, pigeon, and skunk, they are lucky that they were allowed to keep their dignity. Natural to the very end, they disappeared with the setting down of a trash can lid or a few shovel-full scoops of dirt.

LAUREN BARRETT

## Untrue to Form

Consistency,

Form,

Perfection,

Precision,

Meaning...

(That there is no meaning -

Other than meaning is irrelevant

Because of what you taste

When you run your mind

Over the curves of the s  
And the jagged k  
And the rolling m  
And the fluid o)

Oh,  
Consistency and form,  
And format and rules  
And deaths of beautiful women -  
That which makes your heart ache  
In conjunction with the perfection  
Of the end-rhyme.

(Oh preach to me  
The inconsistencies  
Of cummings  
And Dali  
And Janis Joplin)

Or - wait -  
Did I mean to say instead,  
That perfection is derived  
From the composition  
Of a poem with meticulous contemplative repetition  
Of an object?

As the world collapses slowly -  
And the lithosphere grinds in frustration  
Against the rhetoric of plate tectonics -

(Oh tell me then,  
That precision and consistency  
Come from 100 lines-  
A tame 100 lines-  
And not from wild phrases  
And senseless - utterly useless - punctuation...)

Just hold onto that thought for now.  
And wait:  
Until you have time to re-write it in iambic pentameter;  
And add abundant alliteration, thus to muddle your message;  
And you've edited and punctuated beyond recognition;  
And it  
should leave  
you sad and  
melancholy.