

FRONT PORCH

Small Hours

Emily Louise Smith

He brought a flashlight and carried it through me. Shadows grew from my banks. The small hours, he said, have fingers. This opened a highway between us, a red truck under an orange sky. August cracked open with rain. I washed the dishes, and he went after dice. The moon, he called from the road to say, remained, however, between us. Light seeking some crevice by which to enter. Could he hear the fireworks in my thoughts? He wouldn't confess to anything and sat in a tangle of cables behind the entertainment unit. The movie flicked on. After that, I vowed to label the wires so I could remember. Sky goes through ear, breath hooks up to night, train whistle routes through moon and comes out mouth. Or moth? Neither of us could name the thing unfolding its wings.

Emily Louise Smith's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *The Journal*, *Smartish Pace*, *Tar River Poetry*, and the anthologies *The Farmer's Daughter* and *Kakalak 2006*. A graduate of the MFA program at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, she is currently Writer-in-Residence at HUB-BUB in Spartanburg, SC. On her childhood front porch, an old lab snored at the feet of her father, who tended to snore quite a bit himself, typically into the box of Cheez-Its in his lap.