

# Ageless

The Bright Red I had only seen before  
When climbing the rafters in the abandoned shrine  
To find the doves' nests Sean Gilliam said were there  
I brought the sleeve to my nose and pulled away  
Red streaks, brilliant and terrible  
I never found out if Sean was a liar

We stared at it on his gown, the same Bright Red  
The two of us, looking at it, wondering  
Could it please just go away on its own  
I wouldn't tell Nurse Bynum that I ever saw it  
And I don't think Granpa would have either  
Except it stretched like red calligraphy

We sat in the yard in twin wicker chairs  
The red clay brick baking in August  
The bottoms of my feet grew hot through my shoes  
He told me of Hawaii and pulled a nickel from my ear  
Time stalled somewhere near the birdbath  
Between where the hummingbirds came and we always sat

He named his wheelchair Sweet Betty Lou  
For luck, he told me, and to make Mamaw jealous  
I sat by his makeshift bed in the living room  
But I was too old to have nickels in my ear  
Ms. Cody came by every Wednesday afternoon  
To bring casserole and fresh weiswurst

With Mamaw gone, he went to Park Shadows  
So many faces, but I picked him out  
"It's rocket fuel for Sweet Betty Lou"  
He tapped the green canister and winked  
Or tried to, but he saw I knew, like when  
Dad told me his gray hairs were glints from the sun

And don't worry about me I have bridge every day  
And remember to listen to your father  
And are you earning high marks in school now  
And you probably want to be going soon  
But all I wanted was the red brick  
Where my feet were hot and time was near the birdbath

*Thomas Atwater*

Mr. Atwater is a member of the Class of 2012 at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. This poem won honorable mention in the 2010 *Pharos* Poetry Competition. Mr. Atwater's address is 1828 Marshall Street #2, Houston, Texas 77098. E-mail: [tatwater@gmail.com](mailto:tatwater@gmail.com).

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