

Ron Riecki

I DON'T WANT THE WOMEN WHO WANT ME

I want the women who don't want me,
the ones who used to want me, but then I shot a gun
when they were sleeping, at a coyote that I thought
I saw, not at them, but it doesn't matter, that frightened them
too much. I need to get rid of the gun. She told me
she had an abortion. I was silent. It wasn't mine,
someone else's. I don't ask who. I start to talk
about my days in the Army. I don't know what else to do.
She looks out the bowling alley window. We're not
bowling. She wants to go back in time. I say we can't.
She looks angry. She tells me her father died.
No one will ever be happy in this town, she says.
The town looks like she's right. The bowling alley
is alone. It's never got a love letter on Valentine's Day.
It's wondering what the AIDS test will say.
The bowling alley is ugly. Ugly as its shoes.
The same colors. I want the women who don't want me.
I don't want the women who want me, with their children
and sad faces, the way you can tell you won't find happiness
anywhere near them, the word "fart" creeping up
in their conversations. The weather outside is still.
It's tired. I'm tired. There is no moon outside.
The women are starting to want me less. A kid I know
from high school walks in. The rumor is
he was in a psych ward in Chicago. He doesn't look
my way. He has a wife. I envy him.