

POETRY

Gaius

Sarah Dunster

I cannot look at moths.
One seizes himself from
spade to spade, in
the haggard mat of grass roots, and
I feel impatient with the
inefficiency of frenetic,
blind antennae.
Still it is my lawn,
great, or small and disturbed.
It's all my glorious mix of crab
and Florida blue,
roaring ant lions,
and creaking night crawler.
Even the scat of a neighborhood pet
that wandered off the street.
And those triangular wings—
the wings of a folded airplane—
I flinch away from the thick fuzz
of antennae, and even in flinching
I confess it to myself
and to the kingdom of heaven:
If I wish to claim a piece of nature,
I cannot, then, shudder at
the badgering about my nightlights,
the cloud that erupts from

my stalest firewood boxes.
I must admire even the needle nozzle, with
its fan of wasted breath, and listen
to the dull buzz of electricity.
I keep my switches flicked for the
wash of heat that warms and lights
a squat little body,
hovering on a windmill of wingbeats.
I seriously consider the Gaius
along the edge of a swat-tool,
(white matter, suffused with mucosa).
I spend an hour to watch them agitate;
and when night falls—shiver me lunar—
I acknowledge the face there,
the blue chin clockwise of
the eyeless features—more than a medallion
inside my worn jewelry basket.
In the end, it might be that I must even
stretch my own chin on the chance—
even the slightest chance—that I myself,
with my peach-fuzz skin and saltwater breath
could be the perfect, warm perch
to calm the lost moth
and tame its seizing.