

## Even Manna

*S. P. Bailey*

Even manna stops tasting sweet  
after so many plates  
I said to the Christmas ham,  
endlessly succulent,  
cold ceramic tile under my bare feet.  
The ham stared back at me,  
stark in refrigerator light,  
oblivious to the lull between holidays  
we both occupied.  
To twist a carving knife  
bathed in honey and salt  
in my side,  
the ham reminded me of  
my famished ancestors crossing the plains.  
A pack of gingham-clad  
widows of Zarephath  
carefully forming the last of their flour  
into a simple cake.  
Certainly, I said to nobody,  
pioneer men proud of their kills  
wished some buffalo were  
not quite so big.  
Certainly there were times  
they said silent prayers of thanks  
for the brevity of a duck.  
For them,  
I fix myself a plate of buffalo  
for the fifth consecutive meal.  
And I pray over my leftovers

but do not ask for fish and loaves  
multiplication.  
No, but for simple gratitude.  
For the ability to appreciate this cup  
that keeps spilling all over  
my immaculate kitchen floor.



## What Kind of Monster

*S. P. Bailey*

What kind of monster spits a wad of gum in a urinal?  
Blue. Brain-folded.  
Pregnant with identifying evidence.  
DNA. Marks from teeth  
that will long outlast the flesh.  
Because a yellow rubber glove with a hand inside  
with the hand of an eternal spirit inside of both  
will have to fish that out of there.  
And scrub the whole thing down,  
porcelain and chrome,  
with a green sponge and  
the spray-bottle mist of  
chemicals known to cause central nervous system defects  
if used without proper ventilation.  
My mom wasn't embarrassed by the thought of me,  
sixteen, walking around in no-name shoes,  
or denim with a counterfeit stitch-pattern  
across the back pockets,  
or working crappy jobs.  
I located the origin, formerly a mystery to me,  
of money. I mowed lawns and pulled weeds.