

# Losing Touch

by Dan Stone

By the time I heard the news  
your ashes had been pinched and flung  
like salt out on the bay, your schizophrenic mom  
and distant dad cursing their bad luck  
over their shoulders.

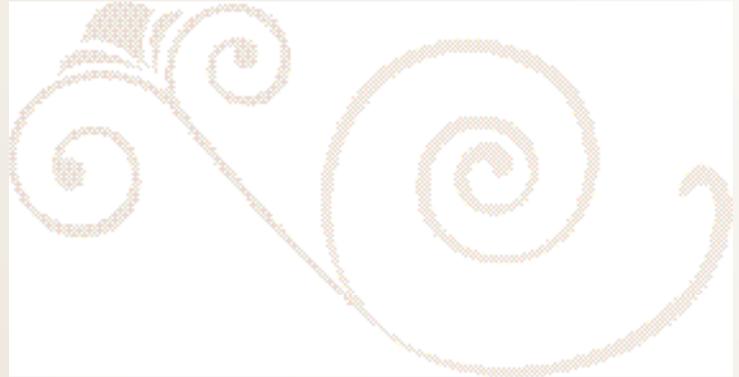
My high school friend was blowing in the wind  
and even though I tried to breathe you back

your scent was gone.

I even bought a flask of Paul Sebastian  
and I set it on the table thinking  
it might bring you through the door,  
announce your presence like it always did  
but the seance failed.

Only you could make it smell like suntanned skin  
rinsed clean in an outdoor shower  
and you would not respond;  
you always liked to keep me waiting.

It's crazy how the memories smell so strong,  
your t-shirt stained with tennis sweat and salt  
your hi-tops that could turn my room to musk  
as you unlaced and kicked them off,  
the reeking feet you used to bend up to your face  
just to sniff and see how bad they really were;  
I would tell you how disgusting you could be  
and watch your grin break out and bubble  
like a bottle of champagne against a hull.



We used to sleep together  
(it's allowed up to a certain age)  
and never touch, but I would wake up  
with your bitter breath warm on my face,  
a steady comfort in the darkness.

I remember staring at your pretty, parted lips  
and wishing I could slip inside and ride  
the rapids to the place where your still waters  
waited, to those placid, unplumbed depths.  
I would smell you on my sheets  
long after you went home.

I never kissed you though.  
I didn't want to wake you up and spoil  
the happy ending we'd grown so accustomed to.  
I didn't know what we could do.

I read in your obituary that you were survived  
by mother, father, sister...no one else....  
I guess that's what I get for losing touch,  
for all those nights when I just  
lay there in the dark,  
letting beauty sleep.

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Dan Stone is a full-time graduate student who supports his lifelong learning habit by working as a freelance writer, editor, and coach. His poetry and fiction have appeared in *Astropoetica*, *Bay Windows*, *Chiron Review*, *Queer Poets Journal*, *Brave New Tick*, *New Gay Male Poetry*, *Rebel Yell: Stories by Contemporary Southern Gay Authors*, and *Gents, Badboys, and Barbarians*. He can be reached via e-mail at [dan@dansville.net](mailto:dan@dansville.net) or at [www.successalliances.com](http://www.successalliances.com).