What You Asked Me
Last Night in Bed

Amanda McMahan

The night swallows us whole. The darkness sleeps behind the walls that contain our city.

Through the window the sky quietly weeps, while my heart falls fast upon our gritty streets of insecurity that weave through our muscles to our marrow that clings tight to our twiny bones.

You wake and ask, "Do you think I'm ugly?" Grateful to the night for its darkness.

You find the courage to say you hate your nose, your teeth are not straight but crooked, and your ears, the lobes that you let me slip between my moist lips, you hate.

The air swells around us and I can't breathe, wanting to drown your thoughts and make them leave.

Neon-Nazis Raft, Too

Jamie Swenson

Some members of the Aryan Race float by in innertubes; wet rubber shines like steel. No swastikas are raised for us to see; nothing is worn that shows us how they feel about us nonbelievers, blacks, or Jews. Swim trunks or cut blue jeans are worn by all; there are no indicators we can use: no chants, no marching, not a single "Hail" reveal the anger boiling deep inside.

They float a river north of Coeur d'Alene, the city where their hate will be displayed with boots and flags, salutes and coursing veins.

For now, they stir the water with their toes (and some get sunburned) in North Idaho.