Don't Ask
Suzanne Rivecca

Surprise. surprise.
I've flipped again –
tore my wrists up, shaved my head.
Straitjacket time, they said.
So I'll sit on the couch
while they search for clues,
probe for some internal bruise,
find something to blame
for this wart on my brain.
Was I ripped from the teat too soon?
Toilet-trained at knife-point
while my id grew and grew?
Electra complex, anyone?
Penis envy? Too much sun?
Just ask me! I'd be glad to share:
I was sick of having hair.
My wrists were asking for it –
A double-dog dare.
Some boy told me
I suck the moisture from the air:
I'm dry as dust,
fossilized –
sarcasm beyond compare.
You can't be sarcastic when you're dead, he said.
Well, maybe that's why!
I tried to die
so I could ditch this irony,
get a new Pollyanna personality.
Didn't quite work –
but there's always next time.
Doctors, parents, friends and foes:
extime I won't shirk.
Before I try to die, I swear
I'll figure out exactly why.

Little Sun
Andrew Towers

In trying to keep the geraniums through winter,
I know they will never be like summer's red & white bouquets.
Once entertaining, healthy arrangements of color,
the sun-loving flowers were integral to my patio display
of plants and chairs, end tables, and hors d'oeuvres.

If I now bring them indoors for six cold months
they will strain for direct sunlight
up on the dining room window buffet:
this narrow ledge of wood
becomes a banished plant's best chance
to survive against Michigan's season of night;
a jutting Arts & Craft's plank, that looks out over the driveway,
getting only a brief shaft of high noon light
from Daylight Savings Time through March,
before blocked by a Germanic lesbian paralegal's
aluminum-sided row house next door.
Barely enough light for any indoor life to survive.
In a house of working-class design,
this darkly lacquered shelf on my West
is still the best location in my home
if any life hopes to grow:
just four panels of oak framed glass
for an ambivalent sun to travel past,
filter through like a cruel laugh.
I've seen plants fight. strangle themselves,
hold onto their blooms.
turn their attention from the dry heat in the room.
just to face a few lonely hours of ice-blue light.

Tonight, the weatherman warns of frost.
So do I salvage from a dying garden tonight?
I know I will just keep them
in their same dirty clay pots,
water stained. rotting inside out from all the rain.
come December, their leaves will turn light and crusty,
flake off, collect with those dreadful dust bunnies.
And conjure up memories of my first boyfriend.

Studying over at his house one Sunday,
at the start of the winter semester,
the last time he and I were ever really together.
There is in existence a picture of me on this instance.