

Refrigerator Sestina
By Leah Makuch

The sparse faculty lounge has become inhabited
By a pervasive, uncontrollable odor
Which emanates from the deep recesses of the refrigerator
That lurks malevolently in the corner,
Hiding sludge and mold behind the unmarked door,
Its eggshell surface masking a cubicle of decay.

We stand before it, reminded of our own inevitable decay,
How we must shuffle off this mortal coil we inhabit
And close the coffin and our life's own door,
The blanket of earth forever masking our odor.
But until we turn that corner,
We must face many years of unemptied refrigerators.

And what is life, but one vast unemptied refrigerator?
While we may struggle, we cannot let our dreams decay
Like so much half-melted lettuce in a shelf corner.
We must make the most of each day while we inhabit
This earth, boldly facing life's rotting odors
Until we emerge at last beyond the heavy door.

Our accomplishments hang on that magnetic door,
Displayed forever on life's refrigerator.
We guild ourselves with pride to cover the odor
That represents the decay
Of the fragile ego we so tenuously inhabit.
We cannot forever tuck our dark side into corners.

Each day, teachers avoid the southeast corner
Of the faculty lounge, slipping past the door
And heading directly in habit
To their mailboxes. They shirk the refrigerator
That reeks with filth and decay,
Hoping someone else will tackle the odor.

Each day, onward marches the unrelenting odor.
It boldly reaches beyond the southeast corner
And fills the faculty lounge with the scent of decay.
Someday it will pass beyond the lounge room's door
Searching for new spaces to inhabit.
Our lives will be consumed by this refrigerator.

Do not cringe from the odor behind the ecru door.
If we hide in the corner from the power of the refrigerator,
We will forever inhabit a world ruled by decay.