



*"Hygiene" by Emma Pittman*

# Smoke

Samantha McNeil

Standing at our kitchen windows,  
we watched the smoke ascend into the sky,  
pewter clouds interrupted the Creamsicle sunrise.  
The sirens grew louder and louder  
until the screams penetrated the air,  
ringing through the halls and crashing against the glass panes.  
The neighbor's house burned until it was nothing,  
barren of the anger that had stained the carpet,  
gone was the terror that hung with the drapes  
and the sorrow that slumped on the bathroom floor.  
Fire finished what he had started,  
A lit match, some gasoline,  
and the clumsy hands of a drunken father.  
The flames took it all.  
There were no liquor bottles to pick up,  
or lines of coke to sweep,  
or children to meet at the bus stop.