

## In the Hallway

*Emily Lupita Plum*

In the hallway I pass by  
an old friend from high school  
whose sister, I heard, married Tilted Chair,  
a drunk with a wooden leg my brother  
used to revere, used to fetch beers for  
on Saturday nights down by the creek.

Tilted Chair already had a wife,  
so that caused some trouble.

And the twenty years between them,  
how his daughter was a friend of hers,  
well, that caused some members  
of the small wheat growing town to mouth  
Scandal! with their teeth and lips, slowly,  
as they drove by the old farm house  
where Tilted Chair would sit, half-naked,  
on his porch firing bullets out  
at the pile of cans filling up his yard.

I turned around in the hallway  
to ask about her, if his sister,  
was she doing well, if their mama  
had gotten over her shock.

As his face came into focus,  
I remembered, my friend, he  
shot himself in the head, died  
alone in his garage years ago  
while I was walking down a long  
dirt road, wiping the red dust  
from my eyes with both hands.