Starring Role

Our House

Tony Tracy
Starring Role

thy eternal summer shall not fade
—Shakespeare

Attention received on a floodlit stage
not enough (foil characters in Hamlet
and Macbeth, derelict villain portrayed
in a campy Vaudeville skit), offstage a magnet

for troubled roles too; scenarios never read
in poems or plays, my strange appetite
for trafficking in the commerce of greed
most beguiling. Cursed with a hedonist’s delight.

Those speed-fueled nights. Ill-fated, unlucky
kid we rolled for dope, a running engine.
From fingerprint files to cuffs to juvy—
a fool’s walk. High drama with true suspension.

Once, atop the municipal high dive, I froze
in a cop’s searchlight. Drained my beer. Then dove.
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He blamed his rage on his heritage—
Cretian blood equaled Cretian temperament:
anger that required fistfuls of sedatives,
slugs of whiskey to insure the betterment
of its effects, though he’d just sleep it off.
Our house more than theater, more than
a show— a place of one continual standoff
after another, where what’s done is done.

Dad made sure mythic barbarism came
to life. So after a cupped palm came the strap,
or whatever could turn a young hide aflame,
make him think twice before giving crap.

History used as a provocation, excuse
to deliver blows. But don’t dare call it abuse.
About the Author

Tony Tracy is the author of two collections of poetry, *The Christening* and *Without Notice*. He is a Pushcart Prize nominated poet whose work had recently appeared, or is forthcoming in, the *North American Review, Poetry East, Hotel Amerika, Tar River Poetry, Flint Hills Review* and various other magazines and journals.