

## Poetry by Shakeelah Mowzer

### Hair Loss

the cat in our backyard is hunting mice, I think it's the neighbour's, a white sky is always the best sky, but I love the rain, not being caught in the rain, just observing nature's meltdown, a woman smacks her cheating husband, the wind blows and we think it's a cool breeze but that's just the wind's way of telling your friend with a horrible man-bun to fuck off and vape somewhere else, school, books, boys, essays, tests, your idiot best friend who lost her virginity in a car, insta-this hashtag-that likelikelike, PE class, those stupid damn shorts, clean shaven legs, they'll be hairy tomorrow, oh my God did you see what she was wearing, the hair in the drain after you shower, am I going bald, am I dying, I'm a college student, you say it so proudly, tests, essays, reading, assignments, more tests, daily stress, a weekly depressive episode, and a fancy piece of paper at the end of it, now you ask yourself if it was all worth it as you sit in your cubicle trying to sell Irish people American products, staring at the monitor, oily face, dirty hair, red eyes, half a cup of coffee, it's cold, and you're five kilos heavier than last month, oh, did I forget to mention that you are single?

## **Black Ball**

She should have stopped him the first time.

In the stuffy office where two people can't stand side by side  
the lock on the door would click down,

and when the door opened her face never broke.

She wonders who has the bigger black ball in their chest.

Him or her?

She should leave.

He should have left four years ago.

She knows all he wants is her mouth,

she guesses his wife no longer wants to open up for him.

He is not handsome and he shows his teeth when his mouth  
sneers,

and his scent is unpleasant like expired musk.

She should have stopped him the first time.

## Peeling Onions

and the kettle screeches  
and the man takes the milk out of the fridge  
and he pours it into the sink  
and it smells putrid  
and he hears a dog talking  
and he turns  
and it's an ad for insurance  
and the woman puts the knife down  
and she wipes the sweat off her brow  
and she frowns at the shot of pain in her back  
and rolls her shoulders for relief  
and she hears two cracks  
and the man walks past her  
and he did not clean the spilt cooldrink off the floor  
and she sees a cockroach against the wall  
and the butter melts like an ice cream cone dropped on hot  
gravel  
and she smells the onions  
and the salt of her tears

and the breeze from outside  
and the smell of smoke  
and the wet clothes on the line  
and he did not kiss her that night either.

### **a broken mirror**

queen of the handball court the only  
rose on the thorn bush like a bulb dimming  
and a boyish attitude but pretty girls are preferred  
four years a favourite then given to a cousin  
who still plays with dolls fun times at sleepovers  
and music videos but almost fell into the pool  
like an inflatable dancing doll screams in the hallway  
a tennis match between champions like a child's homemade  
volcano with cracks in it and a fly in the sink drowning  
under the tsunami from the tap and a cockroach  
crushed under a boot yellow pus oozing out  
like the fresh cream of a chocolate éclair  
someone took a bite out of with fist prints in pillows  
like frantic scribbling and ink smudges on a pinkie

salt juice dripping on paper and snot sucked up  
into the waiting area of a face indented in a pillow  
and when you look in the mirror I am no longer there.