



The Demolition Derby Hotel

The last skipping stone of soap disappears
in its own suds, and water pipes gasp
their evacuation. Tire tracks traverse the walls—
what rides were given here, who took them, who
was taken? Derby-goers left early
this morning, coolers and cozies and high-fives
in hand, head-butts in Mustang muscle shirts.
Across the potholes of the parking lot,
a foreman readies wrecking balls and yells
to any still inside to surrender ground.
And someone stands in a room stripped of itself,
envisioning what filled it to the brim—
two pairs of feet that talked under sheets
about stacks of pancakes and bacon that were
never gonna get made.

KATIE HARTSOCK



The Philoctetes Extended Stay Hotel

Throw a fat honey cake to the snakes
at registration if you want to see him,
your only chance of winning
the war: the man you marooned
nine years ago, the savior you left to suffer
a bite that oozed some wicked bile,
badly misinterpreted. What doesn't kill you
might kill you any day now,
you think as you knock. Perhaps he'd laugh
at that. The cave cracks opens just wide enough
for an outstretched hand to hang
a *NOLI ME TANGERE* sign on the doorknob.
Time, then, for a show of remorse. Or force.