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## Three Poems

by *Domenic Scopa*

### Hot Peppers

*a strip club in Prague*

After several beers my vision scans the bar mirror—attentive, beaming lighthouse. High heels click. Strobes ignite her platinum wig. On my thigh, her manicured fingernails trace figure eights—*I bet you'd like to have your way with me, American?*—My posture stiffens tight as her corset. Fresh out of a relationship, I switch the subject, brag I toured a Nazi work camp earlier that day for college—*University?* she asks. *Then you must have learned about the Jewish son and father forced to kill each other in the captain's pool, college boy?*—Her English broken and sharp. I rise to leave—*I bet you didn't miss your shot to photograph the gas chamber*—my stool keels over—I stumble toward a set of double doors. The bouncer cracks the granite profile of his face to wink—*she's a feisty one, American*—his pupils constricted, his mustache clogged with pilsner.

### Dementia

*for my grandmother*

She's been stuck, bastard,  
on your hook  
for seven years, been  
wriggling there, curled  
up, her half-forgotten  
memories—flashes of leaves  
on a wet road waiting  
to be crushed by every car  
full of what's reminded  
over and over and yet  
the line's not taut—it's clear  
(to me). Choose  
another worm. She's truly  
beautiful, her infantile  
obliviousness being among  
the cherished catch—All  
the same, now  
she just would like  
to dry off—  
burrow into soil.

### After a Miscarriage

This green-house, all  
humidity and buzzing, chock-full  
wheelbarrows brimming  
torments of manure's  
unshakeoffable grasp. Pollen

Autumn 2008

Summer 2008

Spring/Summer 2008

Winter/Spring 2008

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explodes. Tiger bumblebees nudge  
pale blossoms, silent bells  
swaying, calling, meanwhile  
a toddler waddles—trips—  
trips—flagstone  
cracks a chasm for bare toes  
his heaving patterns  
regular persistent  
Venus flytraps clapping shut, then  
open. Chances beckon—choke  
myself with “could-haves”—bite  
my tongue with “what-ifs”—  
(help him stand? pick up  
his G.I. Joe doll?)

He leaves me  
risking my intentions—  
waves from afar.

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**Domenic Scopa** is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and the 2014 recipient of the Robert K. Johnson Poetry Prize and Garvin Tate Merit Scholarship. He is a student of the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA Program, where he studies poetry and translation, and he is a literature professor at Changing Lives Through Literature. His poetry and translations have been featured nationally and internationally in *Poetry Quarterly*, *Belleville Park Pages*, *Visions International*, *Cardinal Sins*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Poetry Pacific*, and many others. He resides in Boston.

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