**Glass Phone Calls**

Melissa Weiss

His breath puffs clouds on the window that I cannot blow away. My thumb smudges and rubs: an eraser blotting at ink from the backside of a page. His fingernails clack against the glass – whip, like a headmaster’s ruler – pointing, as straight as a plank, to the phone at my left. A handset but no dial pad, I bring it to my face and it smells like stale coffee. *Hello?* I hear my voice like it’s someone else’s, and lips I don’t recognize answer, *I’m sorry.* His eyes are empty wells that have been drained dry, framed in dark circles, scribbled on with red crayon. His hair, probably not washed since the day they took him, looks greasy. But I cannot touch. Stubble, like stars plastered onto infinity, poke through his chin. But I cannot feel. He says, *Tell work there was an emergency.* Says, *Cancel the insurance on my Civic.* And the voice I’m sure isn’t mine says, *Okay.* Run my fingers through my own hair, and it *feels* greasy, not washed since the day they took him. Stomach echoes like an empty well, not fed since the day they took him. His face pleads innocence. Or remorse. Says, *You know I didn’t do this.* And on my side of the glass a ceiling fan clicks on, not a breeze but a gust. Lungs swallow it greedily, but spit it back out. It tastes like mothballs, like old clothes. Like something I used to wear. Used to fit. He says, *Call my lawyer in Cornwall – she’ll know what to do.* And my hand goes back to that cloud, finger tracing its silhouette. But it’s on my side now – and wipes away.