## Even Manna

## S. P. Bailey

Even manna stops tasting sweet
after so many plates
I said to the Christmas ham, endlessly succulent, cold ceramic tile under my bare feet.
The ham stared back at me, stark in refrigerator light, oblivious to the lull between holidays we both occupied.
To twist a carving knife bathed in honey and salt in my side, the ham reminded me of my famished ancestors crossing the plains.
A pack of gingham-clad
widows of Zarephath
carefully forming the last of their flour
into a simple cake.
Certainly, I said to nobody,
pioneer men proud of their kills
wished some buffalo were
not quite so big.
Certainly there were times
they said silent prayers of thanks
for the brevity of a duck.
For them,
I fix myself a plate of buffalo
for the fifth consecutive meal.
And I pray over my leftovers
but do not ask for fish and loaves multiplication.
No, but for simple gratitude.
For the ability to appreciate this cup
that keeps spilling all over my immaculate kitchen floor.

## What Kind of Monster

## S. P. Bailey

What kind of monster spits a wad of gum in a urinal?
Blue. Brain-folded.
Pregnant with identifying evidence.
DNA. Marks from teeth that will long outlast the flesh.
Because a yellow rubber glove with a hand inside with the hand of an eternal spirit inside of both will have to fish that out of there.
And scrub the whole thing down, porcelain and chrome, with a green sponge and the spray-bottle mist of chemicals known to cause central nervous system defects if used without proper ventilation.
My mom wasn't embarrassed by the thought of me, sixteen, walking around in no-name shoes, or denim with a counterfeit stitch-pattern across the back pockets, or working crappy jobs.
I located the origin, formerly a mystery to me, of money. I mowed lawns and pulled weeds.

