

THE ASTRONAUT KISSES SATURN

**SARAH FAWN
MONTGOMERY**

When the man who wanted
to be an astronaut holds a bottle
to his aching lips like a kiss,
drinks deep the amber warmth inside
until it goes down where the hurt starts,
he thinks about space—silent as a curse
but sparkling with the souls of the dead,
or like a million wishes for the taking,
him as a boy watching on the porch,
trying to decide, his parents fighting inside.

He thinks about the way the bottle
might float in front and away from him
in space, avoid his grasp, resist him.
Or the way he couldn't chain-smoke Camels,
because you can't light a match with no oxygen.
He thinks he wouldn't feel deadweight heavy,
could get out of bed for once, weightless.
How even with all that dark he'd catch a glimpse
of light—more than now—in the marbled giants,
and even tiny, he wouldn't be insignificant like here.

Soon the astronaut is sloppy swimming
on the dirty carpet—hair, cigarette butts, stains—
like there's no gravity. He's laughing and crying
like he sees the moon. He's talking to no one,
saying he can see why God made it all,
looking through the empty bottle like it's a helmet,
eyes wide, almost panicked to take in what he sees,
mouth still open like a kiss as he swivels, swerves,
stumbles to caress the watery color around him,
glowing rings like Saturn around his world.