

from Juked #4  
Fall 2006

MIKE YOUNG

## *A Certain Chapped Place*

Barbie leapt into a brawl  
with a belligerent couch  
and my patient lips  
wired to my slick teeth  
shackled by sinew & blood  
all the way up to my  
frumpy panicked caffeine addict  
of a brain

who keeps insisting  
to see the manager, saying  
Michael, she'll tell you again  
she prefers handsome men—  
but for you, she is making exceptions.

Well, Mister Worrywimp  
don't you think I know that?  
Isn't it always like this, when the pillow  
is vodka curdled  
and Saturday lurks in the ticks  
of an overlooked red clock.  
Tiny right now as a daydream,

it'll be a diner  
where we're still a little drunk,  
making jokes about honey packets,  
or how the coffee tastes  
like carrots soaked in dish soap,  
where I will wonder two things:

first, if the waitress  
with the faded tattoo on her neck  
smiles bits of leftover prayers  
from a certain chapped place in her heart,  
or if I'm imagining things.

And second, if anyone notices —  
I bet they don't.

Because after the finishing line,  
which is coming out soon,

(just as soon  
as we clear out another couple  
teenage legionnaires  
from the spare bedroom,  
after their filthy scant slivers  
of a holy spectacle  
have shriveled)

after that line, when all is said,  
(but mostly done)  
I'm not as compassion peppered  
as I pretend to be  
to get laid.

Look, they're coming out now.  
Look, Barbie, you slut:

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he's as ugly as me: a worried wimp.  
She's a future waitress with a bloody neck.  
Why, they're basically us.

I think our hearts are stopping,  
and show no signs of letting up.