

## HEATHER WHITED

### *Ron the Ghost*

Ron is a ghost now  
and reminds me  
of paper the way  
he flaps around helplessly  
in the night  
when I leave the window open.  
He does not have green eyes  
anymore or even  
so much of a color as beige  
or even the weight  
of a staple  
pulled from a piece of junk mail  
and he exists  
wrapped around the air;  
he exists  
riding waves of light  
from one blink to  
another  
He does not talk any more  
or have skin  
and his bones  
would not crunch if I stepped  
on his foot because  
I can see the  
blinking orange light  
of the computer  
through his head and  
also the tuxedo  
hanging on the back  
of the closet door.  
If I asked Ron what he missed  
I wonder if he would say  
me  
or coffee after a sleepless night  
the feeling  
of summer or winter in the morning

or white yogurt  
in a black bowl.  
But I do not ask  
because if I blink too quickly  
or put my book  
in front of my face  
then he will go.

*Crooked Little Walk*

I was born with  
this crooked little walk.  
Only, it wasn't a walk then,  
because I couldn't,  
being just a baby  
in a pink onesie  
at a hospital in Arizona.  
It was just a part of my hip that  
wasn't there,  
a speck that the doctors  
thought may or not  
grow into the bit that I needed.  
It was a black spot on an x-ray,  
maybe a frown on my  
parents' faces.  
My crooked little walk wasn't  
a walk then,  
just a bit of crying  
when moving bothered me,  
when I took  
an experimental turn  
to see what my body could do.  
My parents were supposed to do  
exercises with me, but they didn't  
because I screamed.  
My crooked walk was  
a scream then,  
me laying on a blanket  
my mom hunched over me  
moving my left leg back and forth  
while I flailed and ripped at the air  
with my spongy pink fingers.  
I screamed at the brace I was  
supposed to wear too,  
so that was put away  
with the best of intentions,  
and now I have a crooked little walk.

As a child, my mom would  
remind me to  
walk straight, to not let my foot  
flap around at a 90 degree angle.  
My crooked little walk  
wore my shoes out funny,  
so that the left one tilts a bit  
when my foot isn't in it.

*Corrective Surgery*

It was a June day  
and I was not quite  
twenty six  
a hot morning  
when we went to sit  
in the waiting room  
of the surgery  
until I was called back.  
I said for a second  
before going under  
that I changed my mind  
that I did not want  
to do it after all  
but then I was asleep.  
There was a doctor  
who sliced open  
the pinkie finger  
of my left hand  
and touched the bones  
there,  
places I had never  
seen myself.  
He used  
the smallest bits  
of metal  
to join  
two bones together  
and hold them steady.  
When I woke up  
it was to a bandaged hand  
that held  
underneath it  
a stitched up finger  
delicate rods  
under the skin  
holding the bones  
in place