

Mitchell Untch

We took away the armchair
where you sat with the evening paper
and stared out the window
at the neighbor's tree with its two noisy starlings.

We let the rose garden go that first summer,
and the yard, of course;
the clothesline that held your checkered apron;
the twin sheets that snarled and snapped at the dog.

We took away your mother's teapot and matching
china cups, the rims still red where your lips last
touched them. We took away the boxes of matches
and the candles, and disconnected the gas burning stove.

We packed your stemware with the linens,
wrapped your silver in newspaper.
Photo albums were confiscated,
along with boxes and boxes of things too small to mention.

We took away the Queen Anne sofa, the fabric
brushed raw, the color of wheat, with the springs
that sagged at the far left end. The small wooden
stool in the hallway next to the telephone disappeared.

We sold your dresses at yard sales,
hung them from trees like vintage ornaments.
We sold all of your favorite books.
We sold your jewelry for more than anyone had bargained for.

Eventually, we took away your house,
the high beam ceilings,
the hardwood floors that creaked like old
bones under your feet.

It took a few years but we managed
to take away your life,
piece by piece
square foot by square foot

as close to your body as we could.
And when there was nothing left,
we swabbed your lips,
and stroked the thin blue veins of your hands.

Mitchell Untch has been writing poetry for a little over three years. He currently studies with Laurel Ann Bogen. He was selected by the Los Angeles Poetry Festival and Beyond Baroque as one of six Outstanding Los Angeles Poets for the ALOUD Series Newer Poets XII 2007 held annually at the Mark Taper Auditorium, and sponsored by the James Irvine Foundation. Mr. Untch was most recently published in White Pelican Review.

Nothing Is Certain But The Body

