

# POETRY

## Looking for Work

*Alan Massey*

It's making me a bit miserable,  
looking for work on the computer.

    She's got coffee on  
and the TV, too.

I say it's too early for TV  
and she goes, "I'm not in the mood,"  
as if

    we've gone through this before  
and she has no intentions  
of going back.

## Wasps

*Alan Massey*

My mom calls,  
tells me the wasps have come back.  
She can't outrun a snail,  
or so she tells me,  
so she's got me at her place to spray those wasps.

When far away, the wasps' home resembles  
a honeycomb, and they:  
stalactites of their own.

But they fall and stiffen,  
after the spray.  
Only their death can bring me close and I  
can see the complex patterns  
of their curled bodies – thin yellow lines between  
brown.

I can only get this far with it.  
They make paper homes and  
I wonder if I can make paper from it, as  
stupid a thought as that is. Paper I can write  
that letter I've been meaning to write, say.

I sweep them up and toss them into the flower beds,  
and come inside to my mother trying to light a cigarette  
on the gas stove, her head tilted to the side,  
her hair pushed back behind her face.  
She gets up and blows the smoke from her mouth  
and I see  
seventeen different colors in her hand.  
The veins a blue and green and purple.  
The skin glistening and translucent.  
She tells me something,  
but I don't remember what she says  
after she says it.

## **Joints**

*Alan Massey*

It was some time during late winter  
when the shadows of things cast blue.

The wall on the side of the house,  
for one. Or her car in the driveway,  
but no one is here to drive it.

I have questions

but no one to answer.

I look at my hands outside.

In the creases between my knuckles,  
there too is that shadow, of that  
same color as the shadow of her car.

That cold stabs at the joints.