

2009 - 2010  
CBC Writing Competition  
CBC Entry  
Category: Poetry  
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## Family Portrait

My mother, brother, pet dog and myself  
smiling at the count of three.

My brother and I with the best smiles we could give,  
even Roman our German Shepherd seemed to smile.

Mother never smiled too big, said she was  
insecure of her little teeth, I thought they were fine.

Looking at the picture I know our cheery facades  
just masked our pain and sorrow.

Mom's dates with the Chardonnay and Merlot  
had become more frequent, had been for  
four agonizing years.

However at this specific blip in time we  
were happy. First family portrait.

My brother was so young, short, his timid  
smile a replication of our mother's and mine.  
Now, at 16 he stands taller than me.

My natural colored hair was long and

the color of corn silk.

My mother with her weak smile,  
her face bloated from drinking, with  
broken capillaries surrounding her nose.

This was our only family portrait.  
The one that we never took is slightly different.

My brother would stand six inches above  
me and my mother, his looks more masculine,  
yet still has the same shy, boyish smile.

I would have shorter, darker hair.  
The same smile and dimples that I have had  
all of my life.

My mother would smile more confidently  
with her pearly white veneers. Her face  
thinner. She would look happy, healthy.

Our smiles would not be masking  
anything this time. They would be confident,  
effortless, and genuine.

## Nightmare

There is a monster in my bed.  
I awake to a darkness, someone  
entangled in my sheets beside me.  
This isn't the first time  
this monster has crept into my bed  
with his cunning, calculated measures,  
his tawny, masculine physique  
and dark head of hair.  
No, this isn't the first time,  
and it won't be the last.  
He ate my heart,  
wasn't that enough?  
Apparently not as he then devoured  
my brain.  
Curling into a ball  
I pull the sheets over my head,  
a cocoon of safety just like  
when I was a little girl in hopes  
of making the bad dreams go away.  
Where are you  
when I need you mommy?  
There is a monster in my bed.