



Image from Catalina Rug

Robert Daseler

Residue

Remnants of ourselves we leave
Each day and everywhere we go:
The fallen hair we can't retrieve,
Flakes of skin and gobs of snot,
Unwanted stuff we drop or throw
Away, nail parings and our tears,
Also including scraps of thought
And each regret that disappears.

But what is left when these are gone?
In time we tend to deliquesce,
And even traits for which we're known
Are inconsistent, year to year.
We leave behind the old address
In which abides what we have shed;

Our residue may yet adhere
To carpeting after we're dead.

Regrets and scraps of thought disperse
Without leaving behind a trace,
But if we could somehow reverse
Our lives, reclaiming all we've lost,
We might reserve a special place
For what we thought when unaware
Of what we thought, and we were most
Outrageous, careless, and unfair.

The Boy on the Grass

The light behind him, the photographer's
Hunched shadow spreads across the grass like ink
On blotting paper. It now occurs
To me that the squinting child must think
It strange that what is captured here endures
For unthought ages and may form the link
To what he will someday be when he's grown
Into his manhood and a world unknown.

But probably he doesn't think about
His future or the photograph in which
He would appear. Showing not his doubt,
But squinching both his eyes because the pitch
Of sunlight twists his face into a pout
And only now his nose begins to itch,
He endures on the lawn until his dad
Is done. Released, he is only glad.

As he matures, this photograph, recalled
To answer haunting questions that have formed
Amongst his doubts, recursive questions scrawled
Across the years, unwillingly informed
By guilt and shame, evokes a half-appalled
And saddened consciousness, images swarmed
By thoughts about his father's avarice
And clumsy, sheepish ineffectiveness.

Robert Daseler's full-length plays, *Dragon Lady* and *Alekhine's Defense*, have been staged by South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California. The University of Evansville published a collection of his sonnets, *Levering Avenue*, and his essays, short stories, and poems have appeared in numerous journals.