



## Stasis

*By Marissa Mitchell*

History is frozen here,  
an exhibit in a crate, never to be opened.  
Someone will paint over the bloodstains on that wall.  
Someone will shred those filthy papers,  
Russian and Chinese words blurred by rain and time.  
Someday, those mechanized gargoyles perched on Kabul's craggy cathedral  
will be dragged down the mountainside to the pass,  
and their long dead occupants burned, or buried, or both.  
The air is thick with burning tires,  
scorching my lungs, covering me with soot, layer upon layer,  
until tomorrow when I will watch the black rings  
swirl around my sandals in the shower.

I'm twenty-four with no prospects in sight,  
trapped in a camp with a few women and a few hundred men.  
Good odds, but I'm a good girl, a good officer, and good at being alone.  
Odds are I'll go back to the tent early each night.  
Odds are the girl who's indiscreet will make it home before me,  
punished on paper but rewarded in reality.

The dust is settling on my table,  
the picture frames, the candlesticks, the jewelry box, my heart,  
blanketing the me I know while I'm gone, waiting.

