

Why I Skip My High School Reunions

by Craig Arnold

Because the geeks and jocks were set in stone,
I, ground between. Because the girls I ate
lunch with are married now, most out of spite
—because the ones I spurned are still alone.

Because I took up smoking at nineteen, late,
and just now quit—because, since then, I've grown
into and out of something they've never known.
Because at the play, backstage, on opening night
she conjured out of the vast yards of her dress
an avocado and a razorblade,
slit the one open with the other, flayed
the pebbled skin, and offered me a slice

—because I thought that one day I'd say yes,
and I was wrong, and I am still afraid.