

# LIE BY OMISSION

*Emily O'Malley* poetry

do you remember  
when the harsh fluorescent lights flicked on  
how they made each fiber of the shag rug glitter  
my eyes focused on one strand  
woven tightly  
and maybe you didn't see because  
only i pressed my cheek to the floor  
but it was beautiful even through the dust  
then you pulled my head onto your lap  
smeared my hair against streaks of tears on my cheek  
a rug was just a rug again  
you dropped my fragile skull on the floor  
i felt it shatter  
you saw the pieces  
fragments of bone caught in  
sparkling strands of rug  
"help me clean them up, put them back," i wanted to scream  
"help me," i whispered  
"okay," you said and  
took tweezers to the fragments lodged in my brain  
you introduced yourself as "the boyfriend"  
claiming me  
before we ever went out on a date  
holding my hand like my arm was a leash  
i broke up with you before you ever said it to my face  
you told me it was love until you found out i was strange