

the mattresses which keep us in our rest, the beds
which deliver us in our deaths.

the souls never laid to rest.

The nonsmoking motel room's twin-size which
shrieks with the sorrowful whine of a three decade
old boxspring hidden underneath a Camel scarred
comforter with a a black, frayed bible resting quietly
on top of where the lustful, sinful businessmen had
indulged themselves in truckstop-hookers who
wore smeared red drugstore lipstick and eyes which
eternally kept dark bags underneath them like
suitcases for their next journeys.

Her beloved and carefully picked maroon Sears
pullout couch eventually kept close the aching,
weakened body of the man who's once strong,
calloused hands that had hauled it in her for her that
were now being held gently by the chaplain as he
softly spoke his Last Rites. Still keeping faithfully the
fading pattern of wheat and flower that he had also
farmed as a young man, it could not keep him.

The spare mattress gifted from the just-a-friend that she carefully fits with her sister's borrowed blue bedsheets and keeps safe and tall against the large crucifix nailed carefully onto the rotting flower-dotted wallpaper of the room her ailing, elderly mother still calls the children's bedroom.

The child's bed adorned with once freshly tagged department store Disney princess bedding, stacked high and seeming endless with beloved stuffed creatures and held in with white aluminum bedrails for she will thrash endlessly each night in her nightmares and crack her once split open skull right open again on the cold, cold wooden floor on which she will quiver and seize, the soup her mother has spooned into this mouth coming forth and pushing against her gasping breath until all is silent in the stark, pale moonlight.

The queen-size left deserted in our black-molded basement by its previous tenant, its crowned headboard seeming to rise endlessly to the sky, so much holier than us devil's children will ever be able to reach with our small, grasping hands. They chained our ankles to the bedpost, setting us on a graying sheet of once pure, brilliant white. They bow our heads down with the sweating palms of their hands, moving our thirsting mouths with their shakiny hands to recite endless prayers under our breath. They shape our tiring hands palm together and they tell us to close our Satan baby eyes, to never

look above, to never hope for salvation for we are born sinners and we will die sinners. But we hopeful children disobey, our eyelids hint open slowly and wearily and we flit them about like dying moths, searching hard and desperate for an escape into the light of heaven.

The king size with the M.C Escher 'Bond of Union' nailed above in a thick wooden frame, where underneath rested the man, the woman, the Adam, the Eve, who so ashamedly hid their bodies from each other underneath their thick black comforter of fog which came forth from the serpent's hissing throat whence Adam tricked Eve into the biting the fruit of human rot, the soft flesh melting into her mouth like hot butter.

22 years later, the man lays on the mattress with the cartoon print sheets and dark navy comforter his mother had picked out for the cherub-faced, honey-tongued little boy who's glee-filled declarations of delight and thankfulness decorated that stark white room with laughter and love. He awakens his father who has smashed his head against the side wall until it was a bloody pulplike crush, streaking his crushed downwards and painting the walls a brilliant crimson which is now drying thick and russet brown as the father chokes on the bitter whiskey coming up from his stomach as his daughter on her soup, like the endless greywater of the river that drowns him in his sins.

in which we rest our heads and reach the closest thing to salvation.