

ADELE GRAF

## PAPER PUNCH HOLES

my gaze straight ahead, I scorned this foreign  
student who lived among white circles

*like pressed hail pelting his old ways*

I knew how my world would unfold, while this man  
of science grasped nothing, his paper punch holes

*thin white stones on his childhood beach*

spotting floors of this flat he'd soon leave  
so it could be my first married home

*where this fairy dust would charm my days*

I foresaw perfect years forever ahead  
betokened by these profuse full circles

*like lavish sugared vanilla drops*

still, I planned to sweep snags from my future  
so I'd clear out this clutter

*Hansel's and Gretel's white-bread crumbs I'd never need*

why ponder this man's 3-hole punch crammed  
until its cover burst, its cracks drooling holes

*like sleet he first felt here*

snaking his work trail, spilling through stale air  
as fans stirred or windows rose, his circles sprinkling down

*pearly tears for his homeland*

why muse that he'd punched data sheets in files  
then flung these remnants, beguiled as they fell

*dandruff from tight papers while his mood was loose*

I, hard-edged like holes locked at 10mm, 3 per page  
couldn't see him shape positive from negative space  
*with curved blinders shielding my eyes*

soon my married state would cement my views  
why probe thoughts or gadgets like this man from distant lands  
*new to winter's whitened globe*

yet as each married day rolled into my wifely life  
qualms like scattered holes clear only as they clustered  
*these bland repetitive spheres*

turned dulcet O's to duller pleas against my long constraint  
and defecting, I sprawled in holes I'd freshly punched  
*bright balls bouncing down an opened road*

at last akin to this man I'd met in my artless age  
who'd spun punched holes to sense both sides  
*their oxymoron of sameness in snowflakes*