



Booth

Volume 7 | Issue 5

Article 2

5-8-2015

Without Wings

Dante Di Stefano

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/booth>

Recommended Citation

Di Stefano, Dante (2015) "Without Wings," *Booth*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 5 , Article 2.

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/booth/vol7/iss5/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Booth by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@butler.edu.

Without Wings

Abstract

after Milton Kessler

When my dad began dying and no pebble,
no ocean, no altar, could coop my grief,
I went through his dresser drawers
to find my legacy in pill bottles filled with buffalo nickels and wheat pennies,
the shoe boxes stuffed with bills and receipts
from fifty years of saving, the postal badges
from thirty years of work,

Cover Page Footnote

Without Wings was originally published at *Booth*.



BOOTH



A JOURNAL

November 7, 2014

Without Wings

by Dante Di Stefano

after Milton Kessler

When my dad began dying and no pebble,
no ocean, no altar, could coop my grief,
I went through his dresser drawers
to find my legacy in pill bottles filled
with buffalo nickels and wheat pennies,
the shoe boxes stuffed with bills and receipts
from fifty years of saving, the postal badges
from thirty years of work,
Cialis in plastic packets, holy cards
from funeral masses, his mother's rings
neatly folded in his father's handkerchief,
the grey notebooks with the hieroglyphic
script of his Palmer Method cursive,
which related dreams of apple orchards
and untried schemes to get rich quick,
the love letters he'd sent my mother,
signed Giovanni, which was not his name,
nubs of pencils bound in rubber bands,
neckties with price tags still attached
and boxer shorts still in their packaging,

photographs documenting 1942,
Linden Street, the old Italians whose names
no longer ring out like communion bells,
the address book scribbled with residences
that no longer belong to family and friends,
dog tags from World War II and Vietnam
at rest in the reliquary of a Melachrino cigarette tin
along with two Ballantine beer bottle openers,
pleated pants stained with tea tree oil,
work shirts that smelled of attic and smoke,
tattered socks twisted around each other
like the Caduceus or a double helix,
and my DNA's accumulated weight arranged
in bundles and bric-a-brac that will never
be sorted out, catalogued, or bequeathed.
I have never known him well enough, never will,
and yet I see him juking through the defense
on the ten yard line at the old north high stadium,
his legs pounding like hammers against iron girders,
no angel, no wind, no memory holding him back,
and I, a small stone, stuck in his cleat,
knocked loose on the goal line and unaware
of how I'd been picked up and carried so far.

Dante Di Stefano's poetry and essays have appeared recently in *The Writer's Chronicle*, *Obsidian: Literature in the African Diaspora*, *Shenandoah*, *Brilliant Corners*, *The Southern California Review*, and elsewhere. He was the winner of the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award, The Ruth Stone Poetry Prize, The Phyllis Smart-Young Prize in Poetry, The Bea Gonzalez Prize in Poetry, and an Academy of American Poets College Prize. He was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize.