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Letter to Jennifer '09

Abstract

Jennifer, this letter is about
the afterlife of letterman jackets,
your letterman jacket.

Inside the crumbling Jenga-stack
brickwork of St. Malachi's Shelter downtown
tonight; a homeless man is twirling in
the plumage of your coat.

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Letter to Jennifer '09

by Mike Santora

Jennifer, this letter is about
the afterlife of letterman jackets,
your letterman jacket.
Inside the crumbling Jenga-stack
brickwork of St. Malachi's Shelter downtown
tonight; a homeless man is twirling in
the plumage of your coat.

He rolls his shoulders in
its hot shower of warmth,
asks us all to touch this rich cream
and green fabric he has swaddled
his narrow body with, and then
pulls back to ask us if we want
some ice for our hands, you know, like
the coat is too hot to handle. There is no

music except laughter and hot coffee being
poured into paper cups, but he is still dancing.
He is killing the house, down now
in a James Brown crouch,
waiting to be caped in your coat.

And sure, some things never change, in a
high school or a homeless shelter:
Two of the church's organizers told
the man that they would hang your jacket
for him. They went to the coat room where

I watched them slide their hands
into the jacket's pockets and pleather sleeves,
checking for fifths of corner shop liquor.
When you run the show all sorts
of behaviors are permissible. No matter:

Tonight, the man's heels are chattering
and his teeth are standing still—
there is dancing going on inside your coat,
and you need to know that.
We can't wait for gods, Jenny.
It's up to us to make the angels.

Mike Santora is a Cleveland, OH native currently in his second year as a graduate student in the MFA program at the University of New Hampshire.