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Scarecrow Museum

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Abstract
Like all museums, no one visits. This keeps out the riffraff and their dust, the unpeopling that collects on the exhibits and the smooth plastic of the monitors. Pedestrians outside are bound at the waist with leather—to keep the stuffing in.

Cover Page Footnote
"Scarecrow Museum" was originally published at Booth.
Like all museums, no one visits. This keeps out the riffraff and their dust, the unpeopling that collects on the exhibits and the smooth plastic of the monitors. Pedestrians outside are bound at the waist with leather—to keep the stuffing in. Joke: If you’ve ever had anyone ask you to pull the stick from your rear end, you’re probably not a scarecrow. And yet, almost invariably are sticks so far up scarecrows’ asses that they’re structural. Missed opportunity, but no one wants to be seen mocking a scarecrow because they’re good, hard-working Americans.

The figurative is preferred to the literal—clouds in the shape of branches, which is why some birds don’t come down until flapping themselves out. Joke: All the scarecrows go to college, and the college catches fire. Joke: By the time the diploma’s loans are paid off, all the crows are dead, the clouds burned up.

The scarecrows will outlast us with their eternal eyes of O, O on cloth, cloth on straw. Joke: We dress the straw man. The eyes are caricatures but whatever, a crow doesn’t know the keen-eyed sunk-cheeked farmer from the bloated sack washed up on waves of grain. That crow is racist as fuck.

Joke: Why do scarecrows make bad babysitters? Because they’re all on fire. The institutions, too, on fire and the rain doesn’t come around anymore. If there is such a machine as wind, we don’t want to know it. If the world spins out of control, it’s only because it’s trying to shake us. If the crows fall from the sky directly onto our plates, we won’t eat them. Nor should we, we joke.
By matter of ceremony, the exhibits swell with fluorescent light between the hours of 10 and 6. The scarecrows’ shadows blend into each other, wings unfurling. You’re flying, says the father lifting his little girl horizontal to the road under her, past the museum door and toward the grocer who is near-blind but knows the fruit by its give to his touch. The joke is not that all the crows are dead—though they are—it’s that the museum is still here, and unattended, and every evening the ceilings raise slightly, pulling the shadows a little tighter.

Brandon Amico is from Massachusetts. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Cincinnati Review, Hayden's Ferry Review, Hunger Mountain, New Ohio Review, Slice, and Verse Daily*, among other publications. You can follow him on Twitter, @amicob, or visit him at www.brandonamico.com.