

THE TRAGEDIES

By Kevin Stein

It's best to admire the police from afar,
all that badge glint and the clip-on tie
safe for wrestling guys bad or good
to the unceremonious pavement.
O, sartorial fakery, your dapper clip-on
winged me free of knotted hours' indenture
mirroring my father's sandcastle hands.
In song Jimi Hendrix laments what befalls
all castles made of sand e-ven-tu-al-ly,
waves lapping syllables as they do ankles
in my desktop vacation photo. I'm flaunting
the inflatable canoe my breath made whole
on Huntington Beach before its Titanic
maiden *voyage*, which I first misspelled *voice*
while channeling Jimi's, and those clouds
scudding as Wordsworth's always do,
tranquil above the cop's blueberry-cherry-top's
Tintern Abbey. Allen Ginsberg dropped acid
at the Abbey, so good thing he's not here
to get busted naming what can't christen itself,
say, the Carolina chickadee or my backyard's
budding bleeding heart that I've dubbed Ruby,
or the masterful diacope of this cop's baritone
"Your hands, your hands, let's see your hands,"
the phrase echoing Richard III's horse-wish
before a sword punctuated the kingly comma
of his scoliotic spine. Power's not a thing to do
without, being without both cause and measure
tin-crowned upon thy head. Power skewers
even our lionhearted, interring what's left
beneath a parking lot not unlike the one
I'm eyeing now, where black hands rise
from the pavement's opaque rhetoric.