

GRAMPA BUD

JESICA BARTELL

Your house was always dank with the smell
Of cigarettes and cats but you had a chipper radio
A California Raisin smiling like the sun
It held a microphone in one hand
The other pointed to the sky
When your son and granddaughter would visit, I would try
Hard not to take it
That radio and all your treats
Made every visit pleasant

When the dank tobacco took root in your lungs and blossomed
Black Death into your brain
The California Raisin for me
Your Dodge Ram for my Father
Is what remained

I held it close and from its speaker
Spoke, the dank smell of smoke
Still teeming from the tweeter
Later it was packed, in your son's attic
It never came back.

I would cut the rust time earned
When my key turned in that truck
The diesel would combust,
A good engine corroding like my memories of you
So I sold the truck to someone who brought it new life

I brought back the raisin in the form of a tattoo
A bright little raisin, shining like the sun
Singing and dancing like the radio had done
Something I carry with me every day

Since I cannot be carried with you,
In your truck or in your arms, on my arm is your tattoo