

Matthew Van Praagh

**replaced, replaced, re placed**

chilled beans churned to liquid  
freeze the cascading lines of the lower lip  
and leave in their wake a glacial sensation  
that numbs the lingering warmth  
your teeth had imprinted upon it.

your memory must be eradicated,  
every trace masked by frozen flavor.  
there's no way to proceed  
with remnants of your existence  
still following.

neurons in the network,  
connected by currents which  
transfer images of your enigmatic smile  
like passengers shifting across busy subway stations.  
if only neurons could be scooped out  
with each cell replaced  
by the enigmatic coffee bean.

an obsession diverted,  
a mind distracted.  
substitution of one addiction for another,  
because the pains of substance abuse  
could never compare  
to the damage you left.