

# Starring Role

## Our House

Tony Tracy

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**Starring Role**

*thy eternal summer shall not fade*  
—Shakespeare

Attention received on a floodlit stage  
not enough (foil characters in *Hamlet*  
and *Macbeth*, derelict villain portrayed  
in a campy Vaudeville skit), offstage a magnet

for troubled roles too; scenarios never read  
in poems or plays, my strange appetite  
for trafficking in the commerce of greed  
most beguiling. Cursed with a hedonist's delight.

Those speed-fueled nights. Ill-fated, unlucky  
kid we rolled for dope, a running engine.  
From fingerprint files to cuffs to juvy—  
a fool's walk. High drama with true suspension.

Once, atop the municipal high dive, I froze  
in a cop's searchlight. Drained my beer. Then dove.

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He blamed his rage on his heritage—  
Cretian blood equaled Cretian temperament:  
anger that required fistfuls of sedatives,  
slugs of whiskey to insure the *betterment*

of its effects, though he'd just sleep it off.  
Our house more than theater, more than  
a show— a place of one continual standoff  
after another, where what's done is **done**.

Dad made sure mythic barbarism came  
to life. So after a cupped palm came the strap,  
or whatever could turn a young hide aflame,  
make him think twice before giving crap.

History used as a provocation, excuse  
to deliver blows. But don't *dare* call it abuse.

### **About the Author**

Tony Tracy is the author of two collections of poetry, *The Christening* and *Without Notice*. He is a Pushcart Prize nominated poet whose work had recently appeared, or is forthcoming in, the *North American Review*, *Poetry East*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Flint Hills Review* and various other magazines and journals.