

# Chrome Henge

by Kevin C. McHugh

The ruins across the road are not old—  
 an abandoned convenience store,  
 precocious cenotaph of boarded dreams  
 abutting a Shell station, still extant, pulsing  
 with the rush-hour leavings of seven A.M.

Both are monuments to impermanence—  
 the station too perfectly cut in thin, cold metal—  
 the island cap-stoned square and flat: precarious.  
 It bares no naked flaws.

Intended for the moment, it glares  
 as raw as a made-up whore—  
 yellow, red and chrome, glossed against  
 the real and rising colors of the day.  
 Soon to be pocky beneath its frail façade,  
 it beckons shamelessly to us at the crossroad.

It appears too clear cut, too perfect—  
 which cannot be—and so lacks the human touch  
 that it shines as a paradox, out of time  
 and out of date so fast it celebrates our age  
 like teenagers on the spring-break brink so  
 pleased with themselves for having found fire  
 that they fail to discern that it burns itself out  
 in a blaze of timeless transience.

Here at the bus stop I bear witness—  
 marking the seasons in the passing of the sun  
 across the stark and standing angularities  
 of these littered, illusory remains.  
 I have known real dolmens,  
 have plumbed their rooted depths,  
 have moved my loving fingertips  
 across their lithic imperfections,  
 rough-hewn but fashioned by natural hand  
 and as truly timeless as  
 these silent echoes seem not to be.

I board my bus, but my commute began  
 long before the sighing of these doors.  
 Whose memory has shaped this chromed henge?  
 And whose second sight has wakened this thin place  
 to the antique joy that transmutes the mundane  
 in the oblique reflection of ancient days  
 and in the rising of the sun?