

SEAN MORELAND

## NOTRE BEAU-PERE, OR PLANES OF ABRAHAM

There was a snow-shroud thrown across the town's  
stunned sprawl. The Father watched the fishbelly

sky refract bouquets in cathedral glass as it came  
down in a lacy fall, while the wind scritchd

wishes in every window, an old, longing doubt  
scrawled behind the town's work-red eyes as he felt

mother winter fumble for his hand, frail woman in thin  
shawl burdened with a call he took to himself alone.

The Name grew steel-blue where there'd been  
spine. The sky in his throat told him open his eyes

to see, to show the town what they were seeking, so  
he left them with the winter wind, went the wood

that called to him. Three days the sunsets stalked  
vulpine opal and blood dropped down

circled the town, birds of prey. The fourth  
day fell away, and the dusk gathered them

the town's children, coarse-pored, their eyes  
unshriven, limbs unshaven, hair aflame

when they saw him come home, the wind  
behind him, the Name humming a rose in gray

snow, then they asked, in hushed inflections,  
hiccougged questions, aneutral tones, what

their Father had seen as he drew closer on the night  
with dwindling flashlights they knew—The Image of

the Name was grace that ate his tinder gaze, the cause  
the caustic tears that lined his face's gray planes  
with ashen trees.

**Sean Moreland** was raised in Kingston, lived in Ottawa for many years, and presently lives in North Bay. He earned a PhD in English from the University of Ottawa in 2008 and currently teaches at Nipissing University. He won the John Newlove Memorial prize in 2007, was selected as one of Ottawa's Hot Voices by the Tree series in 2009, and his poetry has also appeared in venues including *The Bynwords Quarterly Journal*, *The Malabat Review*, *The Ottawa Arts Review*, and the lovely and elusive *Variations* zine. He was sad to see *The Puritan* disappear, and is cheered by its Lazarus-like re-appearance in a way that makes him think fondly on the sexual connotations of Freud's fort/da game.