

KATHRYN MOCKLER

## GLOBAL WARMING

Everyone was  
in groups of ten,  
and I felt awkward  
standing at the  
cocktail party  
alone.

An acquaintance  
approached.

How are you?  
I asked.

He frowned  
and said, Well,  
not very good.  
I'm experiencing  
global warming.

Global warming?  
I repeated.

Yes, he said.  
I don't know  
whether I'm coming  
or going.

I paused.  
What do you mean?

The rat race,  
he explained.  
It's a crazy rat race  
out there.  
I don't know  
if I'm coming  
or going  
with everyone  
clambering  
to make it

to the top of the ladder.

How is your  
global warming?  
he asked, blinking.

Well actually,  
I said, it's half full.

Really? he looked  
at me skeptically.  
I didn't realize  
you could put it  
in a cup.

Oh yes, I said,  
with a little  
steamed milk  
and some honey  
and some  
brown sugar,  
it tastes really good.

He looked at me  
like I had just killed  
his baby or at least  
like I spit  
in its chubby,  
round face.

See you around  
sometime,  
he said,  
and walked over  
to a group of ten  
standing beside  
the Olympic-  
sized swimming pool.

## GUN SHOTS

I walked into the store  
to buy some cigarettes.  
A man with a gold tooth  
approached me and said,  
you're wearing my clothes.

I was insulted,  
and I wanted him to know  
just how insulted I was.

Those are my clothes, he said.  
They were in the back of my car.  
Let me take you to the car  
and show you  
where the clothes were  
and that they are now gone.

So I followed him to the car.  
The car was brown and had rust on it.  
Look at that spot in the back seat, he said.  
I bent down and peered in  
through the window. He was right—  
there were no clothes in the back seat.

Just then I heard gun shots.  
Duck down, the man said.  
It's a drive by.  
I think they're after you, he said.  
Get in the car, and we'll drive  
somewhere and be safe.

When I sat in the front seat,  
I smelled a familiar smell  
from my childhood: pine needles.  
Is there an air freshener in here? I asked.  
The man said no,  
but he'd be happy to open  
the windows.

The man drove  
down a long two-lane highway.

The trees on either side were tall.

Is the gun in the sock  
under the front seat? I asked.  
I'm not trying to pry, but I just  
want to know in case we need it.  
I understand, he said. Now what  
are we going to do about the clothes?  
It is a problem, I agreed,  
because I have nothing  
to change into. Are you willing  
to take a rain check? I asked.

The man thought quietly  
to himself. He considered  
the matter thoroughly.

I looked out the window  
and wondered  
if it was going to rain.  
The sky now looked heavy and dark.

Do you think they  
are gaining on us? I asked.  
Who?  
The men who fired gun shots.  
Yes, he said, they are gaining on us.  
We must drive faster  
but not so fast as to get  
a speeding ticket.  
In these parts, the locals don't like  
people who speed. They feel that they  
are the type of people who kill  
children and small animals.  
They feel that they are the type  
who rape women  
and burn down houses.  
Have you ever had  
your house burned down?  
the man asked.  
Yes, I said. Once a crazy man  
burned down my apartment.  
He was never caught, and I lost  
everything I owned.  
All I had left were the clothes

on my back.

I've decided, the man said,  
about the clothes.  
I've looked at it from all different  
directions. I've weighed  
the pros and the cons.  
And although  
I'd really like to,  
I've come to the conclusion  
that I couldn't  
under any  
circumstances  
take a rain check.

**Kathryn Mockler** received her MFA in creative writing from the University of British Columbia and her BA in Honours English and Creative Writing from Concordia University. Her writing has been published most recently in *La Petite Zine*, *nthposition*, *This Magazine*, *Geist*, *Sub-Terrain* and *Carousel*. She was a Praxis Fellow and has attended residencies at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Sage Hill, the Canadian Film Centre, and the Toronto International Film Festival's Talent Lab. In 2010, she will be attending the Djerassi Resident Artists Program sponsored by the Djerassi Residency Award/San Francisco Film Society Screenwriting Fellowship. Her films have been broadcast on TMN, Movieola, and Bravo and have screened at festivals such as Palm Springs International Festival, Interfilm Berlin, Montreal World Film Festival, Cape Town World Cinema Film Festival, Worldfest, Cinequest, EMAF, and Chicago Underground Film Festival. She teaches writing at the University of Western Ontario.