

Senior Division, Short Fiction
Sharon King-Campbell, St. John's
Refracted (an excerpt)

The heavy wooden doors to the visitation room swing open to reveal disaster. The roll of plastic he had laid down from door to casket stand is covered in muddy footprints, as is, he observes with a sigh, the carpet around it. He sets about collecting the flowers. Two arrangements at a time, he carries them out back to the compost bin. He carefully unties the synthetic ribbons and removes the plastic card stands before pitching them in. The compost gives off an over-sweet smell, the one which, his internet research tells him, means he needs to balance the flowers out with something "rich in carbon." He hasn't done the shredding in a while, so that will do it. Julia's peas and tomatoes grow in the soil he makes with flowers bought for the deceased and the shredded records of their deaths.