Death of Allegory

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I am musing about what happened to those beautiful abstractions that posed for those ancient photographers waiting for their paint sets to mix right and the lighting to strike the canvas just right; meanwhile makeup assistants apply Handsome blush and Noble powder in between shots.

Victory cantering in on a white Rolls-Royce horse, Chastity fidgeting sheepishly with its iron Masterlock belt. each one sprung vividly to life from marble, a thought in a boxed figure, Chivalry even makes an early appearance, waiting courteously with his plumed helm in hand.

Villainy is making a costume change again, trading in his toga for a pinstriped banker’s three-piece suit, while Reason looks aghast at the check, and Constancy looks around constantly, trying to catch Paranoia as it taps her on the back.

That was during their last shoot while in the workforce, now Justice is drinking chocolate milk from the carton and scratching herself while putting her social security check on the refrigerator next to the card for a DMV appointment.

Glory sits in the corner rocking chair reading books about itself and crying over the black and white pictures of itself, that it so ostentatiously framed with silver and gold. Even Lust has become bored, sitting at home and masturbating like in that old Billy Joel song that no one seemed to really listen to properly.

Death alone keeps working, but even it is feeling the pinch, Its scythe leaning heavily against the mirror as Death turns sideways, trying to suck in the growing gut that is bulging out from its moldy, moth-eaten black robes.
Even if you were to call them back, there would no longer be a proper place for them all. The Mountain of Enlightenment isn't high enough, the Valley of Kings isn't low enough, and The River of Souls isn't deep enough. Tragedy is smiling as it reads this over your shoulder, wearing its Marvin Gaye mask like Activism wears its Guy Fawkes mask when it bangs its head against the wall.

Here on the reading table next to the picture window is a vase of Forget-me-nots, looking forlorn as Wisdom sits in a chair struggling to remember what her name is. Glasses, fingernail clippers, and a half-empty prescription bottle lie next to her on the table, replacing the mighty affects that they have been accustomed to, themselves and nothing more. No meaning behind the box of cigarettes, nothing to be found hiding in a tray of mints, no secret bursting forth from the Sudoku book that is frequently used by whomever is waiting for Vanity to get done using the bathroom.

Brian Good is a sophomore in political science and English. He plans to pursue an MFA in creative writing after graduating from Iowa State University.