



# Shipwrights

*The Review of De-centered English*

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## **Black Sheep**

By E. O'Riley

*Why don't we call her Isabella?  
No, it's too long. Maybe Marie instead?*

What name should you bestow on a bad seed,  
an albatross with dead eyes? Rejected.  
Even when willed, a replacement never  
measures up. Anyone can tell you that . . .

One day she will learn to play piano  
("Au Clair De La Lune" -- such a clever girl)  
for the blind werewolf lurking in the hall  
and the silent audience on her bed.

*The real baby died at the hospital:  
you're just the afterbirth they made us keep.*

She stood on the stair, a bag at her feet.  
A taxi arrived to take her away,  
the slam of a door severing forever  
the hold of those mad virulent tentacles.

*You chose your own name, her mother had sneered.  
So she claimed it with repletion.*