

***Seduction*** © by **Mary Heather Noble**, as it appears in *Fracture: Stories, Essays, and Poems on Fracking in America* (Ice Cube Press, 2016)

It's a bit like adolescence, all this newfound attention that you think you understand, and the young man sitting on your mother's flowered couch is polite and respectful in a way that she'd sworn had gone extinct, talking about your future and security and the wealth of opportunities to come; and though you barely even know him, you can't help but feel a little taken with his outsider accent, his pressed polo shirt with the company logo over his heart, the way he folds his long fingers around your mother's chipped coffee mug, as the steam from the brew rises and dances around his lips—which keep moving and assuring you that it will be safe, and think of the potential of this place. He uses noble words like *exploration* and *independence* and speaks of *recovery* in a way that means returning to normal or a healthy state of being, as if the way that you've been living here is neither of these things. He speaks of recovery, as in returning something to its rightful owner, which is you and your family—of course you want what's yours. You'll remember those moving lips when the trucks come rumbling in hour after hour, again and again, and the midnight light from the drill pad trespasses through your drawn bedroom curtains, the clanging and pounding invading the silence of your room. You'll remember those promises as you try to ignore the chemical veil and swallow the anxiety of what could be seeping into your well. Of course you want what's yours. But you won't know what they are taking when you unlock the gate and let them in, forcing and drilling, injecting God-knows-what into God-knows-where, and you'll think you're doing this for your future, think you're doing this out of love, but what do you know of love except your mother's Palmolive hands and the dance of the willows before a storm? A clean glass of water. The crescendo of cicada in the afternoon, the smell of wildflower dew. You'll be fooled by the softness of what they promise in the beginning—the *FFF-finesse*—but shocked by the unexpected violence of frack. There's a persistent sting to innocence lost, a trace of diesel in the air.

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### **Annotation by: Autumn Pedersen**

The way that this piece by Mary Heather Noble is written is very emotional to me. It uses second person writing pronouns, addressing the reader as ‘you’, placing the reader directly into the specific situation being described. The situation is a company representative coming to your home and persuading you and your family to let the company use your land for fracking. The long sentence structures describe the company representative coming to your home and convincing your mother that this operation is good for your future and security, and will bring wealth. Word choices like *independence, exploration, recovery*, are all used to describe how the employee influences you to agree to let them use the land. The text then goes on to describe how the decision will affect you once they begin the work on the land. Noble uses descriptive language like *rumbling, trespasses, clanging, pounding, invade, anxiety, seep*, all to provide an idea of what the fracking is actually like when it occurs on your land. The ending sentence of the piece is what struck me the most: “You’ll be fooled by the softness of what they promise in the beginning—the *FFF-finesse*—but shocked by the unexpected violence of frack. There’s a persistent sting to innocence lost, a trace of diesel in the air.” These lines are so powerful in that they use the alliteration of finesse to frack and draw such a drastic comparison, that separates the two. What you are told isn’t what actually will happen to the land. The message is: Don’t be fooled by the persuasive attitude that the company’s representative possesses. This piece is important for MVC because to me, it shows what could happen and may have already happened to some people who are members of MVC. When Carol Abrahamzon visited our class, she described a situation that sounded very similar to this one at the beginning, where a company came to a woman’s home and tried to convince her to sell the land for a large sum of money to use for frac sand mining. The only difference was the ending of the story. The woman refused and then contacted MVC to help her with protecting the land from companies like that one. I think this story is important and shows how the land can be abused, and treated badly if it isn’t protected.