

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/4

Andy Roberts
Hawk's Nest

I'm always suspicious when
I meet a well-adjusted poet.
Poets are people who
fall down a lot,
take a long time to learn
how to tie their shoes,
ride a bicycle.
Poets learn by failure,
misfortune, neverending
trial and error.
There is no school to be
a poet, no matter what
the teachers say.
Poets are fish who jump
out of school.
Poets can't help it
or else
they wouldn't be poets.
Poets get lost,
miss their exits.
Poets are late for work,
can't sleep,
let their coffee go cold.
Poets read liner notes,
instructions in Spanish,
Chinese, German and French.
Poets read anything
available when they eat
bagels by themselves
in campus restaurants.
Poets read messages
on other people's t shirts
but don't agree with the concept.
Poets speak for themselves.

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Poets are losers.
No one calls a poet
a can't miss kid.
Poets know you don't need
a mirror to talk to yourself.
Poets know most things
don't work out.
Poets are people with eyes
full of confession.
Poets live in nests
of blisterwood and balsa
high in the limbs
of a falldown tree.
Poets fail over and over
better than anyone else.
Poets never get it right
despite white pepper ice cream,
despite the Oyster Boy
in the church of the Wrong-eyed Jesus,
despite some stupid
with a flare gun
from Switchback, West Virginia,
despite tattooed politicians
and ethical billionaires.
Poets are up with
cold coffee, warm bourbon
as the moon descends
into its morning coffin.
Poets are late for work
again,
missed exit,
watching a hawk
build a nest
on a freeway lightpole
without using hands.