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Pavlov's Poets

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Pavlov's Poets

Gerald Ryan

Dense and unconscious
Deep rooted responses
Command us to nuzzle
Our word-laden bowls.

Conditioned we travel
At ring of the word bell
Towards syllabic rewards
That a poem must hold.

In sweet metered reflex,
Excited by new text,
Pen touches the paper
And we're after our goal.

We salivate, alliterate,
Grunt, parse and conjugate
Until terse in our verse,
We lie damp in our drool.

Then when we're all done
And stanzas are all spun,
We are ready to hear
Our hosannas sung bold.

But no one is out there
To answer our blank stares
As we look all around
For rewards as foretold.

We answered the word bell,
We wrote under its spell.
What goes on?
What the hell?
Where's our bone?