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College of DuPage

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The First Night Of Poetry Class

Patrick Brown

There couldn't be that many rookie poets in DuPage County on a Wednesday night----and Lord! what a riot:
   gaunt, denimed, round, wan, dumpy, beamish, leathered,
   trig, cross-legged, lisping, long-limbed, hawkish,
   young & tender, perm'ed & ploy'ed, studious,
   raffish, cackling, brassy, well-heeled, not so-,
   twitching, 'burbish, tacky, loose...And me, radiating hum & drum, and an old guy, quiet like stone.

Like howls in the forest when the moon is full, there were signs hinting at the notion I might be in a bit deep:
   fat satchels, photocopied poems,
   poetry books (thumbed & limp),
   a couple of corduroy poet-coats,
   talk of workshops & changes made,
   papers traded, knowing nods----news to me, gawkish & thick of tongue, and the old guy, studying the wall.

The instructor swept in vividly late,
   an image from a tragic Poe romance:
   wind-tossed waves of raven hair
   crashing on ivory skin,
   ruby lips that had bartered with Grief & tasted sweet lost Love, eyes that could burn to the nevermore of lesser souls like me----a dim, prosaic lout----or the old guy, plain & pure.
In a slender voice, soft & tight, she asked that we share our lives & hopes, and (lo! & behold!) all were poets----some for ages, some for less: some for fame, some for fun: some seeking answers, some release: some were published, some had hope: some had read, some were shy----all but me, looking for a mid-life rush, and the old guy, looking at the door.

She spoke with compact zeal on the texture of poetry & prose: we'd know them apart by & by, she surmised, and our eyes would plot the twist of a line and our ears trap every murmur & tick and our minds bind words to bloodrush & shiver and we'd find our voices and be whole----and as for me, I knew I needed to try, and the old guy wouldn't be back...

Twilight Magic
Porter Pearson

Bone crushing sounds coupled with ear piercing calls reach you before the image appears. Magically the noise takes shape. Monstrously huge steam rises above it, as an appendage reaches out to grasp an object in the darkness. Suddenly, there are groans and thunderous clamor; the object controlled by the beast is raised high in the air and then placed gently back on the ground. Slowly, visibility improves and the sanitation truck swings south on to its next conquest.