

Poetry

on

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CAN YOU
FIND YOURSELF
IN A POEM?
CAN YOU LOSE
YOURSELF?
CAN YOU
REINVENT
YOURSELF?

Sixth-grade fill-in-blank poetry, revisited **By Jonathan Comas**

I want to disconnect myself
I want to see someone slip on a banana peel, find out if it's funny
I want to yell at a public official,
provided they wouldn't care.
I want to be lambasted by conservative radio talk show hosts
(swallow this, Rush)
Tomorrow, I'll start a bloody coup in an obscure former
Soviet Republic, reign as insane
deified totalitarian emperor

Then I'll find out why Jesus loves me.

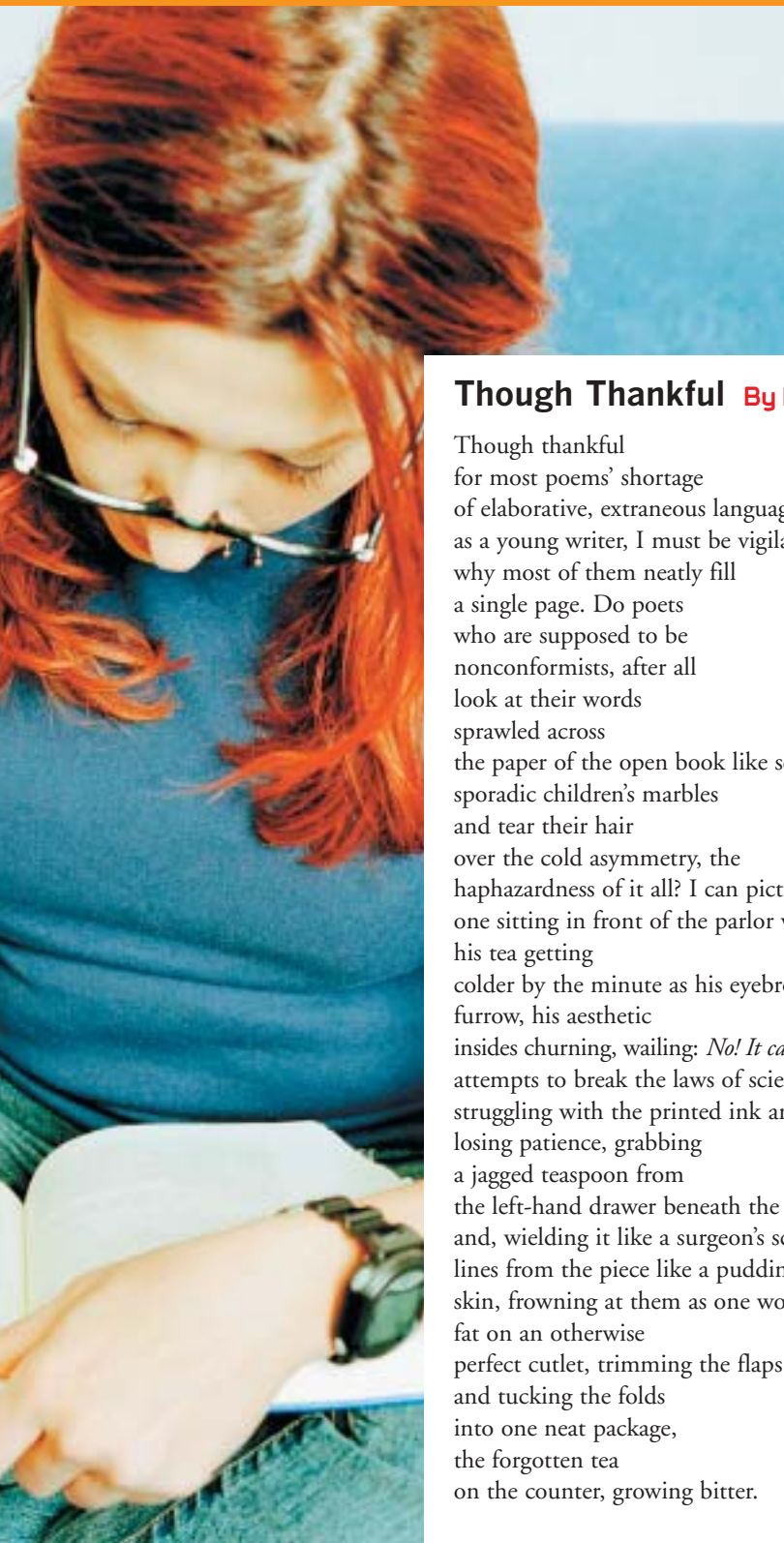
I want to watch a German sitcom to make fun of their accents
Lucy, ich bin haupt
And I want to keep breathing in the near future.

I want to ignore punctuation, unleash the e e within me, let it rot
or burn or whatever it is
that dead grammatically nonconformist poets do
I want to be inadvertently funny
I want to stop trying and start caring. Or is it the other way around?
I lost track
I want to find it

I want to try me
And give in to clichés
And then I'll lose myself just so I can find it again.

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Though Thankful **By Beatrice Mao**

Though thankful
for most poems' shortage
of elaborative, extraneous language (the kind for which,
as a young writer, I must be vigilant), I wonder
why most of them neatly fill
a single page. Do poets
who are supposed to be
nonconformists, after all
look at their words
sprawled across
the paper of the open book like so many
sporadic children's marbles
and tear their hair
over the cold asymmetry, the
haphazardness of it all? I can picture
one sitting in front of the parlor window,
his tea getting
colder by the minute as his eyebrows
furrow, his aesthetic
insides churning, wailing: *No! It cannot be so!* And he
attempts to break the laws of science, logic
struggling with the printed ink and then
losing patience, grabbing
a jagged teaspoon from
the left-hand drawer beneath the sink
and, wielding it like a surgeon's scalpel, scrapes the extra
lines from the piece like a pudding's
skin, frowning at them as one would
fat on an otherwise
perfect cutlet, trimming the flaps
and tucking the folds
into one neat package,
the forgotten tea
on the counter, growing bitter.

JONATHAN COMAS ON WRITING

"I am unsure if my writing has a 'purpose,' in the sense that a human lung's purpose is to assist the process of breathing or that a hammer's purpose is to drive nails into a wall."

BEATRICE MAO ON WRITING

"I want to stir the reader into unease, to awaken him to the subtleties in everything."