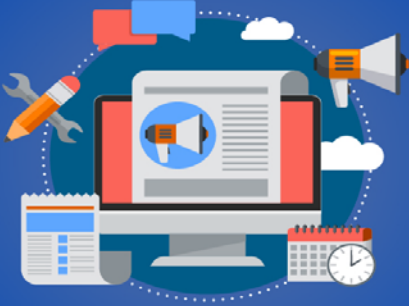


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A Poetry Anthology in the Mail

John Grey

Do I really need this?
What are the odds that anyone within
will be truly happy with their life?
And, if they are, will that joy extend no further
than the sighting of a crocus or a blue bird?
And, if that's the limit,
will the rhythms resonant, the metaphors ring true?
In other words, if my aged uncle tells me
he saw a crocus or a bluebird,
will I be able to tell the difference?
I'm sure there'll be some self-wounding.
Even a wrist slash in verse.
Strangers will jump from bridges.
General ennui or a painful breakup –
probably some of each.
There'll be political screeds,
ordinary people hauled up pedestals,
left at the very top,
to be got at by vociferous praise.
I imagine there'll be some attempts at humor
but any laughter will be quickly drowned out
by page after page of type-faced sobs.
No dog poems. There never are.
And I quite like dog poems.
Grandmothers will appear.
Cancer and senility have to start somewhere.
And bursts of passion
will near jump out of their lines' skins.
Of course, synecdoches will flourish
like, dare I say it, crocuses.
The events of the day can't just stay with the poet.
They must encompass the world.
But poets are weird. As everyman, they're ill-fitted.
Could be there's one of mine in here.
If I open this book, it will be to check for typos
and make sure they spelled my name right.
Otherwise, I'll set it aside
with a promise to get to it later.
That's a theme, no doubt,
pursued by some poems within.