

4 X 2

SMITH

DUFFY

POEMS

PRESSED WAFER
9 COLUMBUS SQUARE
BOSTON, MASS. 02116

Zack Smith

Home of the Clay Soldier (Bronx Poem I)

Even in a real city, I can manage
to find clay, track it down
the floor of gum, black wads,
gunk on concrete, on
hell on earth. Construction
sites, I never thought they
would smell of ponds and
stables.

If you bury waste deep enough, longer than
I guess I'd be able to handle,
away from thought, it feels pretty
homey. Like I'd go wading in
or fishing in,
maybe catch something.

That must be why there are so many
Bronx Lightning Bugs.

Crossing the streets — look both ways —
aware of the encroaching Caterpillars™
that they use to carry pipes
these men in hats are some big
fucking dudes; what would it
take to intimidate
a clay embattled soldier —

These lightning storms
produce some static god —

or that plastic Mary
in the meridian
I forget her Spanish name.

Tourist Through (Bronx Poem II)

There's nothing I think
could scare me more,
terrorize, than one lone pigeon.
Makes me breach my gait
and trip around his
mottled inbred stunt.

Not in my town, my city,
you can collect them,
birds, just by

sitting and rotting or walking and
shedding trash. I can make way
in Beantown, make something
out of the Gardens flock,

vultures in Sergio Leone styles,
pigeons who'd know
you'd better believe I own
the Boston birding scene.

Some doves got machismo —
Some doves got the best of me —

So I wish the sidewalks were wider
And, back east, dropping something
less pathetic, strutting less for
the guys who are bigger
or the birds who know
my game.

Bar Breaker: Little Girls Hating on Older Ladies

Saturdays, I'm not sure why
they even make them to be much
of anything. The Sox are on somewhere
else so that I can't see and this crowd
is academic,
they came to avoid my game.

Drinking kamikaze shots, they
tell me, vodka and lime juice
doesn't make a whole lot
of sense, billfold suicide
for some girly-girl, celebrating
an age when you should be
imbibing older. I don't know,
I bought a beer I'll work it
out later.

It's better outside hitting brick,
leaning and smoking, I don't know
I shouldn't do it — wasn't it whiskey,
I thought, that put hairs all over,
I thought, that's what we were

supposed to, the college-boys
are ordering gin now — gunned down
to an old lady squalor, stuff's
for doctors making housecalls.
It's a black bag drink, the wino's
on the street have a better brand —
I can smell it.

I'll stay on curb until I hear
some deciding moment when
I can go back inside, relax,
I love my team this year.
The fairweathers, vodka hussies,
can *hari-kari* for all I care.

Bank Notes

The fact is I lift my head so rarely
that I can carry that same image
down every street, on my way

to the bank, where Dhespina
the Jamaican Teller will razz
me, again, about checking
accounts as I drain the last
dollar from my Sovereign
Savings and head to the Store
24 for a Nutrament® breakfast.

I like the cashier, we don't
know one another, but he
always flicks my Red Sox

scratch ticket and calls me
a winner when Dice-K
isn't performing for shit,
I won my money back,
thick syrup of my meal.

Turning back from Central Cambridge,
I stop as I always do, for years,
at the Novartis building, to
fix myself in the glass, my biomedical city,
to pause as I always will because
I'm contemptuous of anything
that doesn't grow on me,
that I have to cross
on the street I'm the only
one standing, looking up.

Thick coating of my daily routine,
the taste of chalk in the tin can,
I'm coursing through this path
because I've done it for years

and in the distance, I get the Hancock,
my blue darling, it's the cityscape,
keeps me from veering, or feeling
burdened — money in my pocket
the same thoughts everyday.

Shaunalynn Duffy




*for Jim MacEachern, soulmate and poet of my heart
and of my inbox, with love*

That Time of Happening

What if I became
the space between
here and now:
that time of happening
when you say,
“live
like breathing
or finally loving,”
and then
movement
began to cease?

II things with which I am enamored
and 3 that make me cringe

1. the synchrony of the city system
2. the crows feets creases besides the eyes of olds ladies
3. girls touching their cheeks with the backs of their hands
4. dimples from smiling
5. the white bone demon
6. the brightness in the eyes of the empowered
1. uninhibited bumblng
7. and 2. pet names and 8. forgetting cynicism

- 
- 
- 
9. women in high heels who curse like truck drivers
 10. people swooning with their eyes closed
 11. the endearing, sarcastic wit of a middle aged puppeteer
 3. "the heart connection"

My Movement to Movement

This is my movement to movement.

Capital M.

No more ruminating, waiting, procrastinating, hating,

No more ugliness.

No more inhibited moments of reflection upon reflection upon re-
say it!

I am exactly where I want to be,
who I ought to be.

There is nothing that I want more than
not wanting.

Let every pore open with the free flow of essence.

The acrid scent of loving and knowing,
anger and overwhelming power.

I will create creations.

Wave waves.

Never second guess the feeling.

I am not scared of you

or me

or the space between us.

I live there.

and

I renounce the word

"should."

Believer

If I could be anything, I'd be a believer.
I'd kneel in the aisle and cross myself.
I'd wear dresses on Sunday mornings,
and Saturday afternoons I'd confess.
I'd keep a bible on my bedside table
and a book mark between two pages.

If I could be anything, I'd be a believer.
I'd run beads between my fingertips
and keep my eyes on the ground.
I'd lift my voice to the rafters in praise
and fall upon my face in the Presence.
I'd give exactly ten percent of my wages
to a charity with fifty percent overhead.

If I could be anything, I'd be a believer.
I'd whisper prayers under my breath
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us
sinners now and at the hour of our death.
and one night He would whisper back.

If I could be anything, I'd be a believer.

SHAUNALYNN DUFFY grew up in New Hampshire and is now in her third year at MIT. ZACK SMITH was born and raised on Cape Cod. He now lives in Boston.

