When the time comes to stretch me in my final rest, worry not about the handsome house in which I'll sleep nor the loamy spot where the sun will sigh in resignation.

Just unfold the white pillowcase and place the brilliance of that poet on my bed to quiver me in simile, to eulogize me eternally

a tree had a habit of breaking my heart into a covey of doves, to the way a coyote once breached my demeanor and stared me down into a pile of molten awe.

When it is time to choose a chisled verse, forget those rhymed reminders of my virtue and sonnet me an ode to the way

Forgo the fake photo for all to see and make me an ekphrasis that does not so much mimic how I looked in high school nor eternalizes me at that milestone birthday but teases out the many ways life lined my face, metaphors my sense of humor and fragile smile so the agony of defeat is barely there.

eschew convention and give me a poet's send off.

Affer Reading "Unfolding the White Pillowcase" by Barbara Schweitzer Then, when I can see the apple or the battle plans of David or the bodhi of Buddha, I know I am ready.
I know I must take a cool block of language and mold it into the shape of beauty and grace.

But there is no salve here in simply reading.
I must run my fingers along the white marble of verse, study the music the molded lyre makes, melt into the Italian swirl.

I reach for the volume thin as forgiveness, grab at the stanzas, lick the lean words.

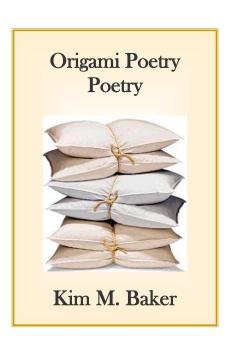
The Art of Poetry

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## The Homeless Poet

wanders suburban streets, to the four corners of convenience where she recites Rilke and her own existential verse for spare change, for handouts, but she always buys her own coffee, yes, sir, and thank you very much, under her breath cursing the hybridization of cars and poetry. I even saw her once lounging in a rickety beach chair outside the grocery store, her back to the unconscious customers, as she argued feverishly with a volume of Plath, chanting the reasons to live.