

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 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

When my time comes,
 eschew convention and give me a poet's send off.
 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 millstone 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.
 When it is time to choose a chisled verse,
 forget those rhymed reminders of my virtue
 and sonnet me an ode to the way

**After Reading "Unfolding the
 White Pillowcase" by
 Barbara Schweitzer**

Then, when I can see the apple
 Venus held 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.

I reach for the volume
 thin as forgiveness,
 sniff its cover,
 grab at the stanzas,
 lick the lean words.
 I am hungry for comfort.
 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.

The Art of Poetry

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Poetry

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 Poetry**



Kim M. Baker

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.