

## A Few Favorite Poems

**Howard Schwartz**

### **MY FATHER HAD MANY PROFESSIONS**

My father had many professions  
all at the same time—  
watchmaker  
antique dealer  
middleman—  
first at every estate sale.  
Once in a while I went with him,  
saw him bargain  
and barter,  
try to eke out  
a few bucks.

He often wished  
for a shop of his own,  
but when Max offered to back him  
he turned him down.  
He was too restless  
to stay in one place.

We never knew  
what he would bring home—  
old watches,  
gold wedding rings,  
a real working slot machine,  
once  
puppies hidden in his pockets.

After dinner  
he sat down at the dining room table,  
put on his jeweler's loop,  
and studied every item,  
reciting its history,  
ferreting out its hidden  
secrets.

My mother and sister  
sat with him  
for hours,  
while I lay in bed upstairs,  
reading.

## OLD DUDE'S GOT A MUSTARD YELLOW MUSTANG

a mustard yellow  
ford mustang  
California GT  
shiny chrome wheels  
new muscle car  
that's the old dude's ride

it can't be missed  
bright as morning sun  
it burns the eyes  
a condiment on wheels  
the old dude's  
mustard yellow mustang

bald and fat  
pasty white skin  
old dude's looking good  
hot babe sittin shotgun  
age spots  
bright red Clairol hair  
they ride cool  
in a mustard yellow mustang

kids grown  
empty nest  
ties no longer bind  
road trip baby  
time to go  
the old dude's ready to ride  
got a mustard yellow mustang

Terry St. Clair

## SATORI IN BUDAPEST

On the plain of Pest,  
as I entered  
the Dohany Street Synagogue,  
the second largest in the world,  
they cautioned me,  
Keep Your Hat On.

& in Buda,  
up on Castle Hill,  
in Mathias Church,  
named after the first nation builder,  
I was chided:  
Take Your Hat Off.

Confused,  
I went to my friend, Gabor,  
for advice.  
“It’s the same God,  
isn’t it?” I moaned.  
“Who’s lying?”

“Both,”  
he said.

\*  
~

Then he looked at me  
& smiled &  
I understood—

poets are pagans.

Every Generation Has Them

its dreamers lost

    not fitting  
        any mold,

knowing

    there's some place    out there  
                                for them,  
but not knowing

    where or even where  
                                to start looking.

They start out

    understanding only  
        that they need to be    somewhere else

Different: not a cog,

    a machinist, engineer or even overseer  
        in the low-budget air-conditioned strip mall franchise  
                                with its own uniforms, hygiene checklists, pre-measured  
                                serving sizes, home offices and customer satisfaction polls.

Not like the others

    who fit in naturally, or learn quickly to conform,  
        not seeking seeing or wanting other options,

But these truly not fitting,

    knowing this at an early age:  
        volunteer self transplants now rootless  
                                impolite expatriates of polite society

Oh Creative Wayfarers —

    Which of you will you wake up one day  
        with suburban spouses, children  
                                Commuters buying the American Dream  
                                on installments unplanned

wondering

    why you took the hard road  
        to end up here with me.

Alexander Balogh

## The Sleep of Long-Haul Truck Drivers

Ask about existence, the fugue of stars.

They know the purest lull,  
the wheel's worn constancy, the unbearable  
silence of the world.

There are artifacts. A rip-  
waisted angel on the dashboard. A boy,  
his arms around a ball.  
A woman's mouth and her neck a question.

Ask them if the highway winds  
or unwinds. Ask if  
when they hit fall mid-state  
the hills catch, blast of light  
on limb, on rock, if winter turns carnage.

The deer an eye you freeze, a dark hush.  
It's a kind of love, they'll say,  
in a whiskey low. A prayer the moment

renders. Ask about the fleeting. Their last kiss,  
the beginning of wandering.  
*The blue living room light of it...*

Ask how the evening stuns the shoulder  
weeds, bone grottos, how the line  
breaks and breaks and breaks into  
God, how a car goes  
blind and perpendicular into dust.

Ask the eyelid against sun.

Ask the boy with his arms around the animal  
poised in headlight, your own freight  
and hum. Ask the road, they'll never say.  
Ask the road to be always.

Eve Jones

*Title from The New England Journal of Medicine*