



Comfort

In afternoon heat, the east wall's widening shadow. In downpour, the arcade.

The bus when you're late. *Please leave a message*, when you dread *Hello?*

To wake, in the ordinary dark that is not the flood, the siege....

The list of potential reliefs—endless. So, let's not enumerate, though

that too could be a comfort. Might you count the hours that you must

wait until night, your next first date, the possible deepest soothing since

someone last stroked your face? You can make it weeks on smoke,

drink, porn, sweets and grease.... You can fake it, hooked

on season seven of *Murder's a Blast* or that silk-rope-round-your-neck trick

you picked up a night in the Village. You can poke at a smartass, you can

taunt a bright witch, you can laugh in the rain's face with your head thrown back

and imagine, this is your special twist, pain into blue-gray indifference, with its cool

sensuous nap. You can caress the thigh of silence and silence will murmur

back, out of the caverns of your own chest in the cadence of your wet breath.

And in the glare of the countless degrees of freedom, there's the oasis, marriage.

Or enlist—a proxy dad's orders for every choice, buzz-cut to bullet.

All of which substitutes for what you miss—a memory, a wish

in a box in an attic lobe of thought, a folded plot you never could figure

how you could finish, without someone else. Someone's fingers must

address the history in the knit of your brow, and in your jaw

the grit, the secrets you can't spit or swallow. Someone's listening

touch, not another ghost's ears. Warm as the actual palm on your cheek,

warm and oceanic as tears—arrival, immersion, at last,

all the rest a circuitous wandering, through a land of broken stone

tablets, inert idols, dust.... You must've stumbled this far to be known.

Jed Myers



Jed Myers is a Philadelphian living in Seattle. He studied poetry at Tufts University, then trained in medicine and psychiatry. He maintains a private therapy practice and teaches at the University of Washington. He began seeking publication of his poems following the events of September 11, 2001. Two of his collections, *The Nameless* (Finishing Line Press) and *Watching the Perseids* (winner of the 2013 Sacramento Poetry Center Book Award), were released in 2014. He won the 2012 Mary C. Mohr Editors' Award offered by *Southern Indiana Review*, and received the 2013 *Literal Latte Poetry Award*. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *The Tusculum Review*, *Sanskrit*, *Briar Cliff Review*, *Quiddity*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Ilanot Review*, *JAMA*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and elsewhere. Jed brings poetry and music together in varied collaborations, and he hosts the long-running music-and-poetry cabaret NorthEndForum. <http://jedmyers.com/>