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THREE POEMS BY CHRISTIAN RECCA

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From a Whiff of Patchouli

Which teenage feeling do you hold out for?
Is it the feeling of sleeping on the floor?
Or spending Fridays at the record store,
Or walking home from someone's house and wanting more?
Do you miss lunching with the weirdos now,
Or thinking you were different somehow,
And telling teachers all they said was shit,
And being told to wait awhile, "Just sit
Still and all will come to you?" That fine lie
Which made us forget it all by and by.

What of the dirty books you read at school?
The smell of night when the weather became cool?
Light shows on the scrim of a swimming pool?
That proved, not sadly though, you were a fool.
You'd wake when everyone was still asleep.
On linty toes, past bedroom doors, you'd creep
Into the room with the big loft windows,
To stare at passersby and think God knows
Just what the world has got in store for them,
(On days more valuable than precious gems)
And though you'd never dare give it a name
It kept your mouth well-watered just the same

And weren't these moments by yourself the best?
Better than the pep rally and the prom dress?
Much better than the words of elder men
Who told you what to want, and how, and when
And tastier than food your Mother cooked
And just as good as how your lovers looked?
But better still that phantom record sound
In everyone you met and all around
And though you wished in vain for perfect times
You now know how to read between the rhymes

Remains

We threw away a pile of tax returns,
Some cans of Bud, and casks of Gallo wine.
The jug of protein powder won't help now.
The healthy dinners made no difference.

We packed away his clothes for someone new.
His journals went into a cardboard box.

It came to thirteen grand with stone and box,
And I declared it on my tax return.
We had to sell his house to someone new.
The night we got the check we all drank wine,
And for a while I felt no difference;
If only I could feel that way right now.

I hate to bring it up but I think now
And then are coextensive terms. The box
Has no windows, no doors. The difference
Can't be deducted from a tax return:
Cannot be found inside a glass of wine.
Forgive my rambling on to something new.

I cry about the man I never knew
Whom I'd avoid if he were here right now
Who used to slur his speech when he drank wine.
He wouldn't let his children in the box
Inside his head. And Jesus's return
Could not have made the slightest difference.

For he was never blessed with indifference.
And he could not escape the things he knew.
He dreamt of those who never could return.
There is a lesson you must learn right now,
Before you have to lie inside your box.
There's more to life than musings over wine

'Cause everything sounds good while drinking wine.
Your girlfriend tells you how you're different.
But she won't be there with you in the box.
And then the earth will baptize you anew:
You'll be reborn as food for worms. And now
There's not a soul that prays for your return.

You'll cry for something new inside your box.
A glass of wine will make no difference.
Now you'll never fill out a tax return again.

The Crack-Up

They say don't write about it (the crack-up)
We'll only fight about it (the crack-up)
I looked into a tunnel (I cracked-up)
I grinned; threw back a double (and cracked up)

My baby laid me hurrayed me then played me
Drove me got lost on Grove Street
Supposed to set me free

Now if you stress the littles (you crack-up)
You best stick to the middle (no crack-up)
The clock don't work when you're alone (you crack-up)
They're gonna stick you in the home (to crack-up)

My baby preyed to me, saw through me, then sued me
Pursued me up and down Grove Street
Nothin' left to see

I'd never felt so strongly (the crack-up)

What do you think they taught me? (to crack-up)
People dying all around (from crack-up)
Just one more reason to get down (you crack-up)

My baby laid me hurrayed me then played me
Preyed on me parade down Grove Street
Babe it just ain't me

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Christian Recca recently received a B.A. from the Johns Hopkins University with a major in English and a minor in creative writing. There, he studied poetry under Greg Williamson. He is currently teaching for the Institute of Reading Development, having relocated to his hometown of Rutherford, NJ.