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## Three Poems

*by John Grey*

### On Becoming an Eagle

We're cruel when the opportunity arises,  
to our own skin, the tattoo artist  
jack-hammers an eagle into a leathery arm,  
for every wince, a tip of feather, a lick of fire,  
no rebirth without a trickle of blood,  
a spurt even better. I visualize a cymbal  
crashing, waves of sound splashing the ears.  
Or a tenement imploding, clouds of cement  
dust, wood like rain. I wish I were tougher,  
a boxer in a ring maybe bashing some lights out,  
an ornery devil who ought to be on a leash.  
I'll growl when the guy's done cutting,  
leap to the floor, jump around on all fours.  
We're animal when hungry beasts show up  
on our flesh someplace. Maybe I'll just bite  
my lip instead. I've hurt enough. I've earned it.

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### At the Club

We're oiled enough for what we need to do.  
A steamy night, we're scrappy and starved.  
On the prowl for anyone we wish, even  
the international market. Chortling on all sides,  
like it's a river. I trace my nails to some lovely  
with a fine brown map. Buddies move with  
the light, are coated a bilious lime green.  
I sit back, like I'm in rain and loving it.  
Hold onto that head my love or you'll find  
you're in the sheets. Alcohol operates  
in just such a way, closes in on you like men.  
Music blitzes stone processions. We're working  
that in whatever way we can. Body like  
a vase, may I sniff your flowers. Supernova  
eyes - learned that one from the Discovery channel.  
Have another. I'm boozing my way into your  
thoughts. Just waiting until the decks are cleared.

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### Yellow Tape

I'm the guy with the yellow tape. I arrive  
after the first responders but before forensic,  
before the detectives in the suits who've seen  
all this before. I wrap that strip around  
fire plug, telephone pole, even a parked car  
and a mail box. I'm paid to separate the ones

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Autumn 2008

Summer 2008

Spring/Summer 2008

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Editor's Note

Guidelines

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to whom death's only a job and the gathering  
crowds who are there for the novelty  
of bullet wounds and blood and tears.  
Some nights, I do nothing but sit back  
in my patrol car, sip coffee, maybe nibble  
on a donut, with yellow tape balanced  
on my knee, a whole mess of it in the  
passenger seat, a box of rolls in the trunk.  
Look in on me, one eye closed, one ear  
cocked for the radio. I may seem loose  
but I'm ready to spring. Catch a glimpse of  
these fidgety hands. It's never over.

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**John Grey**, an Australian born short storywriter, poet, playwright, musician, has resided in Providence, RI, since the late seventies. . Has been published in numerous magazines including *Weird Tales*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Greensboro Poetry Review*, *Poem*, *Agni*, *Poet Lore* and *Journal Of The American Medical Association* as well as the horror anthology *What Fears Become* and the science fiction anthology *Futuredaze*. His plays have been produced in Los Angeles and off-off Broadway in New York. He won the Rhysling Award for short genre poetry in 1999.

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