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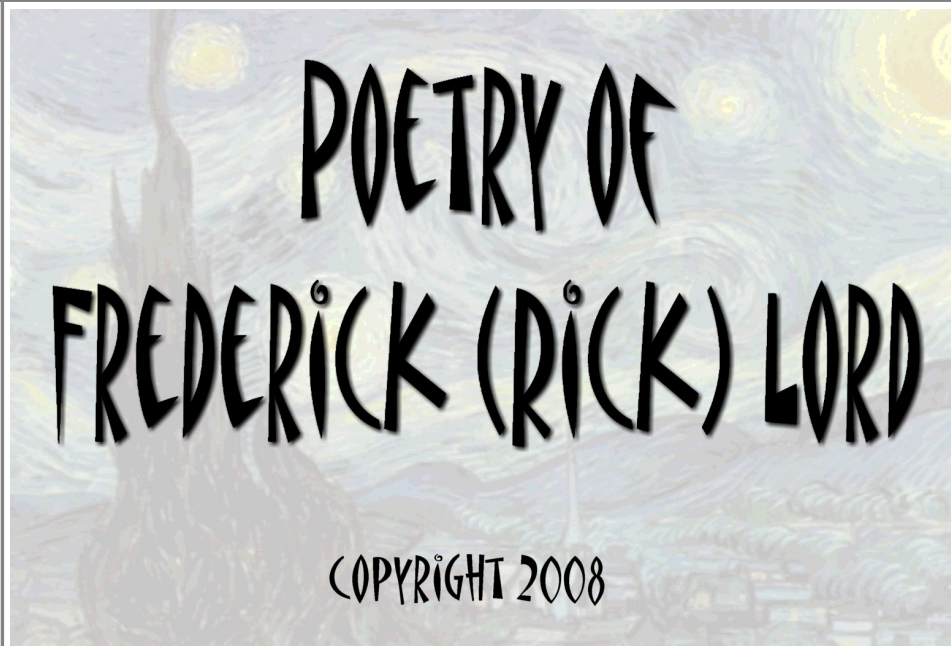
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Suicide Motel

We're on the sharp curve
of a fast highway,
with an even faster river
right out back.

Each unit has a gas oven
with a bad pilot-light,
high ceilings, well-anchored
chandeliers, and extension cords.

We stock the medicine cabinets
with razor blades and sleeping pills.
You'll find the ungrounded plug
for your hairdryer right over the tub.

Singles welcome.
Day rates only.
Always a vacancy.
Garage parking extra.

Who Made This Movie, Anyway?

What a cliché: after a fight with the wife
meeting an old girlfriend

complimenting her skin
she offering to show him all of it

How extraordinarily ordinary:
wife shacking up with shrink

poet now starving in attic

visiting friends at supertime

Next she gets sick and sorry
--or is it sorry then sick?

Of course it's cancer. Diagnosed
much too late. You had to ask?

Not an original line of dialog
in the whole melanoma-drama

You'd think someone could have made more
out of sex and death than more sex and death

Acting: Adequate
Bodies: Not bad

I give the flick one star but that's only
because I'm in it.

Memo: to Infant L.

Dear unsmiling newborn purple cabbage
curled tight with pain in your see-through crisper:

Because you perversely insisted on breathing
after we shut off your respirator,
we are, in effect, punishing you for not dying
until you have hurt and cost us more.

We have asked God to forgive us for thanking God
when the doctors said you had no swallowing reflex
and the lawyers said we did not have to feed you.

Which means you go hungry until you hit Heaven,
which is metaphorical, unlike Hell, which this, for you,
is, something we somehow managed to create
out of the best intentions, good faith, even love,

which you will not, of course, over the hour or two
left of your life, feel.

Frederick (Rick) Lord is the Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts at Southern New Hampshire University. After two years at Wesleyan, he earned a B.S. in Business Studies and an MBA at New Hampshire College, then an MFA in Poetry from New England College. A collection of his poems, *What I Made Instead of a Life*, was published in 1996. Lord has recently published poems in *Dogwood*, *Blueline*, *Switched-on-Gutenberg*, *caesura*, *kaleidowhirl*, *Bent Pin Quarterly*, *Relief*, *The Sylvan Echo*, *Glass*, *Juked*, *Innisfree*, *Umbrella*, *MO*, *If*, and *hotmetalpress*, as well as the anthology *Family Pictures*. He lives in Bow, New Hampshire with his wife Heather, a painter.