



Five Poems from *The Harmony & the Irony*

by Colin Dodds

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Half the Pain

Walkin on a sunny day,
feelin only half the pain

I'm just a big fat man
But I think I understand

Meditations, words of praise
But still nothing ever stays

And it gives me a lift
Every thought is a gift

And when I'm no longer bored
I cry out oh lord

The Ledger of Blessings

Through New York City, the world is demystified

The clouds bubble with the city's orange and blue lights

My clients, the sparrows, consider me while I eat a sandwich

What a mixed blessing it is to live so near the zenith of a civilization!

Screws

In memory,
either everything or nothing
impresses

The things you love
come and go on a strange tide,
and never return to the same spot twice

Every stone, every hill is conditional
Never mind how you or I feel,
Never mind what you or I think

We all know what the world is
but pretend otherwise
a thousand ways

And when you
put the screws to reality,
it screws out from under you

After the Teddy Bears' Coup

In a future set adrift,
in a year without a proper name,
in the uncounted days
of the reign of the soft authority

The teddy bears marched
in their triumphal parade
down Candy Avenue,
their swords still drawn

The people at the table next to me
discussed *the perfect shower*
Every word they said
blotted a thought, aborted an idea

They have ways of keeping you around,
unbalanced and shop-bound—
the heavy, repetitive music
that makes it impossible to think

The bright blather of a life nearly televised
that ties the tubes of our minds
Communism, NPR, the numbing lunches,
all the patient castrators

It's a sickness
dressed as a mercy
But in limbo,
what's another lazy lie?

The tyrant denounces
chocolate abomination cake
with her mouth full
Ain't she cute?

Work Week

The days passed like nights.
The road was dark and glistening
with the hateful promise
of a weekday morning.

I can already see the old people,
the people who look like me—
the reasons they call it a work week.

It takes so little to turn us into robots.
I say *Good deal* through numbed lips,
when it is, in fact, not a good deal at all.

Drunk two nights in seven.
I'm a fool to think they haven't seen my kind before.
I turn up the punk music,
getting all worked up just to sit around.

This thinking is useless,
like a cement that corrodes.

All the solutions are stopgaps.
All the reassurances are false.
All the certainties are unearned.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir
sings "Walk on the Wild Side"
through the ceiling tiles.

And if God the Father took one good look
from down here,
He'd demand a paternity test.

Colin Dodds grew up in Massachusetts and completed his education in New York City. He's the author of several *novels*, including *The Last Bad Job*, which the late Norman Mailer touted as showing "something that very few writers have; a species of inner talent that owes very little to other people." Dodds' screenplay, *Refreshment*, was named a semi-finalist in 2010 American Zoetrope Contest. His poetry has appeared in more than a hundred publications, and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife Samantha.

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