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A Winter's Worth Of Hay

*"Wishes are horses that kick you in the teeth
and then ask you if you'd like another ride."*

Robert Mezey

No horse to kick me in the heart.
Just a fat, bitter white pony
to rattle the tin can of its hoof
against these sullen grey fence-posts,
opposite of which
I stand and offer carrots --
asking nothing in return
but recognition
for the broad and ugly tooth-marks
in my knuckles.

Death Masks Are True Portraits

A dead skunk laid out
along the stripe
in the center of the road,
its poor, rigid tail leaving off
where the flat line begins,
its death mask
asking me to laugh
at the irony and pain
of its passing.

The passing wheels
will pound its body
back into the pavement
until there's nothing left
but a faint over-ripeness in the air;
the viscosity of roadkill.

Some Strangeness In Proportion

*"There is no excellent beauty that hath not
some strangeness in the proportion."*
--Francis Bacon

The tide begins to leave,
and the first sea stones,
with their black and glossy crowns
polished to the point of seeming oily,
start to nuzzle
towards the air
above the water.

Just as Rodin
could have dreamt it
had his hands
allowed his head
to dream of seals
beneath the sea
coming up to see
what's going on
on shore.

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The poems of **Christopher Watkins** are appearing or have appeared in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The GW Review*, *Slipstream*, *Euphony*, *Talking River*, and *Red Rock Review*, among others. His collection of poems, *Short Houses With Wide Porches*, is forthcoming from Shady Lane Press. He was the Fall 2006 Writer-in-Residence at The Jack Kerouac Writer-in-Residence Project of Orlando, Florida. He is a graduate of the Stonecoast MFA Program at The University of Southern Maine. As a songwriter, he has released five albums under the name Preacher Boy, and has received a gold record for his songwriting work with Grammy-Winning artist Eagle-Eye Cherry. He currently lives in Port Jefferson, New York.