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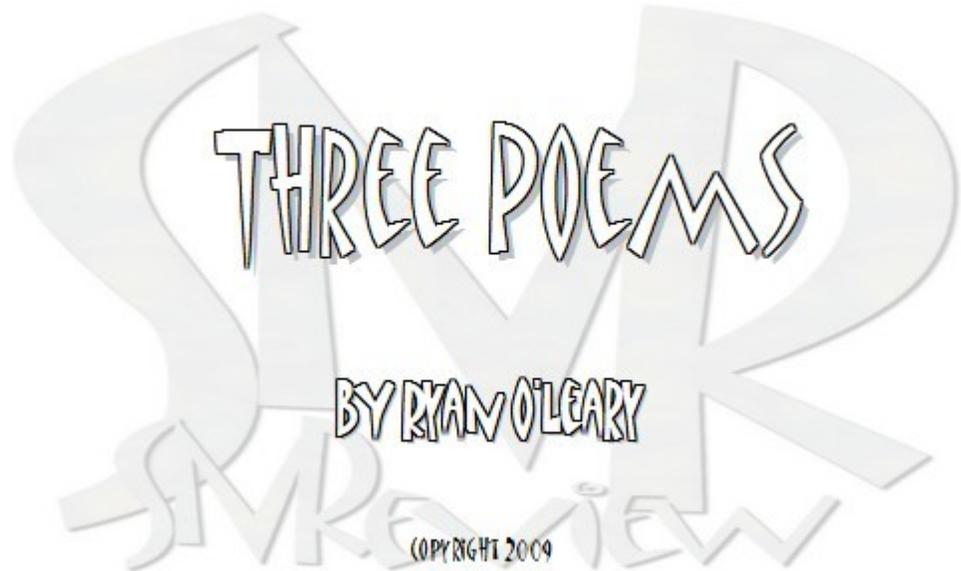
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## **The Longing**

The dark road is endless,  
and I have been growing tired,  
but there is an enticing light  
between the lines of trees  
just beyond the road's end.

I begin to run,  
and the trees become  
tunnel walls  
racing past me  
in a subtle blur.

When I finally stop, I realize  
I am no closer to the road's end  
than I was before.  
But at the same time,  
I am no further from it.

I could sprint if I wanted,  
like a crazed man being chased by lions,  
but I would still never reach the horizon.

## **Catastrophe**

Sorrows pour down mountains,  
like rivers  
from the eyes of clouds.

The city our ancestors built  
with bare hands  
is gone.

The sun will rise tomorrow  
and shine on this desolation.

But if just one hand  
plants just one seed

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a tree will grow.

The masses will gather  
around this tree,  
and together we will plan  
to rebuild the city  
our ancestors built  
with bare hands.

All the while  
our tears will evaporate  
and become clouds  
towering above mountains.

But when those clouds turn to rain,  
it will pour down the mountains,  
like rivers,  
and we will have to begin again.

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## The Legacy of the Shining Man

The sidewalk led to a fence where a new one, parallel to the first, began.  
In each direction, there was a crowd beckoning him to walk their way,  
to leave his footprints of gold on their silver sidewalks.  
But in one sudden movement, he jumped the fence  
and began down the city street.  
He entered a diner where he asked for a sandwich.  
But when he took a bite he tasted nothing.  
He raced outside and looked up to the blue sky for an answer.  
Clouds formed, it began to storm, and all of a sudden,  
a bolt of lightning struck his leg leaving him unable to walk,  
unable to leave his mark with golden footprints.  
He laid there on the cold concrete for hours  
before he finally lifted himself with his arms.  
He began to walk on his hands,  
and he continued down the street  
until the road became sand, and suddenly,  
he was just a man  
standing on his hands  
admiring a thousand shades of gold  
reflecting off of the ocean  
beneath the setting sun.  
When he reached the water  
he began swimming towards the horizon outlined in gold,  
where he will be remembered forever.

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**Ryan O'Leary** is twenty-two and a recent graduate of the University of Texas where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in rhetoric and writing with a minor in creative writing. Ryan's poetry has been compared to Mark Strand's early work.