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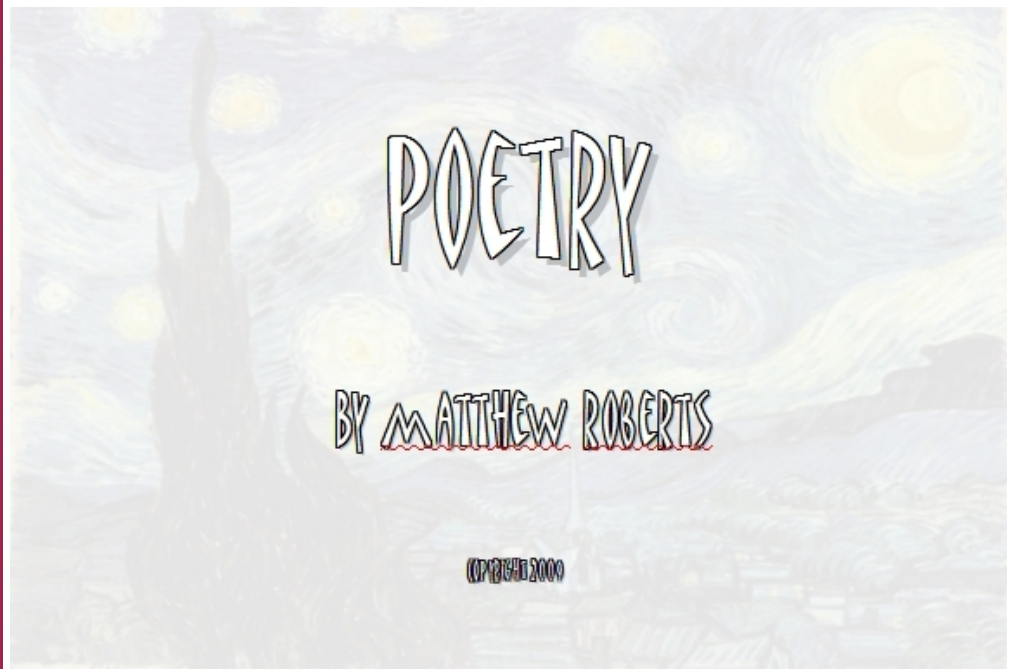
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Breakfast in Paris

Hair well combed, moisturized face,
looking and smelling of a fragrance from Italy.
Combined with my features, I am
the perfect mother's son. The image of me.

I have images of you in Paris somewhere,
a leisurely breakfast, croissant and coffee,
possibly writing or painting before
a gentleman escorts you home.

But then, that's not the picture
played out for you, my mentor.
You were snared by the skilled,
sly hunt's man and his peacock's

perfect military uniform and you
were secretly given your family.
You once cried for what could have been,
and it shook my world at 5 years old.

But now here I am, almost as old
as you were then, that morning
cooking our breakfast in tears,
as my older sister comforted you.

Sitting here in Asia, I think of you.
I write all I've done, ask how you are and
address it to your Paris apartment,
but of course, it will never be sent.

Her Aryan Experiment

The 10 months are up and here we stand.
Her Aryan experiment completed now.
Conclusion – ‘Fun, but it could never last.’
Standing outside in the ice cold bullet February
evening, she looks from side to side as if
the walls of the houses stood in condemnation.

We’re in a dark corner, around from her
house she’d never let me in, her Asian
house acquaintances could not know of her
western boyfriend, ‘It just wouldn’t be right.’
Although secret, forbidden, hidden away it was
still a real heart pounding, want to die moment.

Last saw her as she clumsily turned and waved
goodbye. She couldn’t say goodbye, someone might hear.
Walking home I marched, like my dad had taught me to,
told myself to suck it up, like life’s persuaded me to.
At the corner shop buy, dirty booze and dirty cig’s.
My friend and I make a toast to all the fish in the sea.

Old Legs

There is panic in a place of work.
Some run but most stand by
in dumb frozen shock.
The gray, mature man dies

lying in paperwork. Fits and foams.
He becomes numb and watches
his feet twitch for the last time.
Thinks of the places they’ve taken him.

The little boy toddles by him
and with his tiny legs, red shoes,
he climbs the stairs of the house
that he lived in as a child.

His eyes don’t close, they cloud over
there is a peace he’s never known.
It fades to black then for a brief
moment, everything becomes clear.

Teacherbullynerd

I am teacher, large and strict,
but forever student, skinny and gray.

We play pranks on the nerdy boy
but I catch them and break it up –

punish them, and their leader, myself.
Look at the boy with his dark eyes,

as he sings my praises with mouse's voice
for finally having saved his dignity.

Tuesday Afternoon Shopping

This one night stand that I was looking for
has now wasted 4 months of my life.
She looked beautiful on the dance floor,
that's all different on Tuesday afternoon
as she dumps a large box of condoms
into the shopping trolley. She says,
'It costs less when you buy more of them.'
'That's great.' I say behind her back
whilst making a gun with my fingers.
I kill her, then blow my own brains out.

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Matthew Roberts is 32, from the Yorkshire Dales, in the UK. He has a degree from Cumbria University, and has been working as a teacher in Seoul, Korea for three years. He has had his poems published in many poetry magazines including *Decanto*, *Haggard and Hallo*, *Inquisition Poetry*, *Verdad*, and *Munyor*.