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Three Poems by G.B. Ryan

Late Afternoon, First and 88th

She walked her walk in high-heeled boots with dangling pom-poms,
a grown woman, much beyond the youth, probably high,
who stooped behind her and tried to catch the bobbing playthings
as she strode beyond his reach without a backward glance.

He straightened up and turned for approval to his friends,
five of them, their schoolbags on the ground, who had held back,
all of them near six feet tall and almost two hundred pounds,
none showing a wish to rob, molest or interfere.

If he had knocked the woman to the ground the charge could be
assault and while she and he were white, his friends were black
and although this was Manhattan not Alabama
nonparticipation might not be enough in court.

As I approached, I thought up friendly words to warn them of
the legal risk of such nonprofit activity
and noticed them step backward and look another way,
clearing the stage for a thing about to happen here.

Had he surprised me, my white assailant would have downed me –
I moved with him and tried to bang his skull against a car
and though he broke away I was satisfied to have
communicated in language I think they understood

Art Collection

A painter tells me he will very soon be forced
to throw out his unsold canvases
accumulated over the years
because they occupy working space.

He foresees a public television program
about a sanitation worker
accumulating over the years
a thrown out canvases collection

that he plans to donate to an art museum
in a building to be named for him.

Limousine Drivers

Limo drivers
park waterside and eat
their lunches

Plastic-boxed
Central European

food items

One feeds gulls
on his weight-loss diet
just perhaps

Gulls pester
in his absence other
limo drivers

To the gulls
all the limo drivers
seem alike

G.B. Ryan was born in Ireland and graduated from University College Dublin. He has been with several New York publishing houses and works mostly as a ghostwriter. *Poems, G.B. Ryan* will be published by Elkhound in March 2012. He has two children and lives in New York City.

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