Five Poems from *The Harmony & the Irony*  
*by Colin Dodds*

**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.