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Poem Without Drugs // The Professor

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Poem Without Drugs

I don't know how to write poems without drugs,
so I ask my dog to write them for me.
Usually he complies, but today he just
huffs and says, "I don't write poems without turkey."
So I go to my father. I say, "Dad, won't
you help me?" He says, "Last time I did that
we both got a C, and besides, I don't
write poems without black tea." So I collapse
to the floor, and I beg and I pray
for God to write me a sonnet. "Just this
once let me borrow some words," I say,
"I'll cite you as a source, okay? I promise,
in the name of Christ, your ever-loving son."
But by the time He answers, the poem is done.

EMILY HARGITAI

The Professor

I brought the professor a poem.
It was naked and covered in vomit.
I said, "Sorry, professor. I wrote it with food poisoning."

He said, "Bile bleaches words. The wino cries
expired milk. Please put your clothes back on
and read the damn thing."

I said, "Sorry. I wrote about childhood love
in the woods. And a ferret named Waffle."

He said, "No you didn't. You stuffed a dead rat
and some leaves in a squeezable bottle."

I said, "Sorry," and hammered my hand
to the desk with a pen. It really hurt.

He said, "Here, have a snack," and passed me a peach.
Then he mopped up my blood with his shirt.