

ottone m. riccio (massachusetts)

Commemorative Piece For The New P.O.

what's wet against your skin is the thought I put there
like a postage stamp to insure delivery

I'd hang around a post-office
and watch the postmaster perform his duties
handling hundreds of clients daily
with bureaucratic politeness

I'd work in a post-office without pay
reading all the postcards
smelling scented letters lovers airmail to each other
over county lines
I'd learn to guess ounces
and measure with a sober eye how far a stamp will travel
of course you'd smile at my second childhood
"is it still time for games?" you'd ask
and I'd nod professionally
to impress you with the dry solemnity
of all this licking

I'd miss the eyeshade that's out of style now
everything looks like everything
and everyone looks the same

yes I'd live in a post-office
and pay for the privilege
I'd smell those new sheets of stamps before anyone bought them
and study those memorial pictures
I'd overplay the lightweight scale
count the change in the drawer
and even dust off the posters
of those glum men who've struck their own poses
I'd put my fingers on the wet sponge
and think of your breast damp against my fingers

I'd stick a stamp on your belly
and give it some thought

Stele: (stēl , echoing "steel") -- seven syllable poem with
typography dictated by the poem itself ... evokes an
emotional, kinetic, and/or intellectual response by
presenting an image, action, or statement.