

## Getting Well

"It is only when people begin to laugh that sanity returns." -- Robert Moses

I thought it was distant thunder  
but it was only me  
beginning to laugh.

I began to stand.  
My body  
was telling jokes  
on itself,  
it was that strong.

I took out my brain  
and looked at it.  
It was titled  
Best Humorous Stories of the Year.  
I had written them all.

This was something new:  
ticklish health.

I had spent years  
working at serious  
equations of fear.  
The answers were perfect:  
one side always equalled the other,  
there was nothing absurdly left over.

Now I dress in funny hats,  
my mother, my father,  
my wife and children,  
I wear them all.

I balance now,  
a clown on a low wire.  
I am saving myself to the last,  
like a punchline.  
My sanity is endless,  
like the story of the shaggy dog.

I do not know how this happened.  
I think that is funny.

## The Fish of My Wife

They have followed her  
for years. They are still  
with her. In dreams.  
In magazines, watching her.  
Circling under floors.

Or she will start to speak  
and they will come  
rushing beautifully out,  
like trout  
over a falls.

She wants dishware  
with fish fired  
into them. She is always  
showing them a thigh,  
luring them on.

Ask her who, what,  
they are, and she dives  
openmouthed and innocent  
away. But these  
fish-stories circulate:

they have been known  
to live years on  
dry land; for counting  
on sleepless nights,  
they can leap over a life.

-- Philip Dacey

Cottonwood, MN

CHARLES! CHARLES!

Calling my name, you come running  
thru the tall grasses  
6-month bellyful of manchild  
plums falling from your apron  
and the wasps running  
up and down  
    inside your dress.

Blackburn Lake

An occasional fish leaps  
at a mayfly fluttering by,  
so I roll a cigarette  
forget the next five minutes  
and the busy highway  
    fifty yards away  
where I've either gotta thumb  
or walk nine miles home  
in the rain.