

VECTORS

I just received some poems back from a young poet-editor,
the same one who once told me
that I had a definite style
although it happened to be one that repulsed him.

He said of this batch
that there were two he liked best,
that they were the best writing I had ever done
(had he been researching the little-mag archives of the
University of Wisconsin?)
or that he at least preferred the direction
in which I was now going.

Unfortunately I had written those poems years ago
and they do not resemble my present lamentable efforts.

What's more, there was something vaguely suicidal
about them --
was that the direction to which he was referring?

Anyway Ron Koertge and I got chatting over the phone
about directions in general:
would you, for instance, rather be
a poet who had come from a good direction
and was now going nowhere at all
or one who was coming from nowhere and going nowhere also
or one who was riding off in all directions at once
or one who was on his way from Lodi, California
to Eloi, Arizona?

We pretty much concluded that,
as many others, Bukowski most recently,
have pointed out --
the only critical direction
is the one that leads you to the typewriter.

AVID SPORTS FAN

when she finally managed to drag him to the theatre
he was disappointed
that all you could get at half-time was champagne
and startled to discover
that the second act began
without a kickoff, center jump, or face-off.