

THE CHIROPRACTOR

my neighbor swore by him and I was in no shape to argue, hurting like I did. no appointments, people started lining up at 6 AM to see the doc and by 8, it was a full house. I got there at 6 sharp, second in line, and after the wait, the old man started working on me. twisting and popping and turning things ways I'd never imagined; at one point, he even knocked the wind out of me but when I got off that table, feeling sweet nothing, no hurt at all, I knew he knew his stuff. I went back for 3 adjustments, feeling prime and then the doc up and died. asthma complications, they say ... but isn't that how it always is; you find something that works and either the price goes sky high or they take it off the market and all you can do is all you can do

KEEPING UP WITH THE PAST

today,
I'm wearing a shirt I've had for 10 years. a loud but faded Hawaiian print. at one time, it seems as though I wore it every other day. now, it's rarely separated from its hanger but not because I like it less only because I like it more

POETS DON'T WEAR TIES

they were going to do it at Cal State, in the Eucalyptus Room. "Be there at 4," she said. of course, I was late but so were the poets ... "Modern poetry should be at least as interesting as the movies," quoted the professor in his introduction of the poets. I hadn't seen a good flick in some time so I was really mulling that tidbit over when sharp-looking Zepeda stepped up

to the podium. "He's a poet?" she whispered like someone getting a deal. "He's not wearing a tie so he must be," I answered. I probably could've done without the look she gave me. Zepeda was pretty good. he read his "John" poems and ended with a sorrowful story about a reservation Indian who'd been shafted by himself and life. next, Locklin lumbered up, gray and gutted, scoping out the audience. "He's a poet?" she asked, looking short-changed. "Do you see a tie?" she rolled her eyes for an answer. Locklin was also good. his poems were funny but shadowed with that everyday sadness. after the applause, I asked, "Would you like a glass of wine?" with her finger pointed at my chest, she informed me, "No one here is wearing a damned tie but you." "That should tell you something," I suggested

-- Robert Underwood

Redlands CA

INCIDENT AT 4 A.M.

4 naked people
stood cluttered around the kitchen table
in various awkward postures

somehow discussing art

THE MAN WHO JUMPED
BEYOND HIS TIME

left the rooftop
too suddenly
and died
without ever learning
why

SHE WANTS YOU READY

this girl
wants you ready
whenever she needs you

but when you need her
she often has a headache
her period
or a juicy argument
on the tip of her tongue