

Gary L. McDowell

Aubade

I've been thinking about thinking about God
in my bruises:
will say nothing— psalm me—the congregation

and language will have won again.

I will die many times before my death.

Aubade

I'm less personal than, say, winter.
If winter summers—

bangs on the drum that makes sugar sweet
and salt swell in mines.

If I could make warmth self-reflexive,
the spiritualist—the weatherman—

that rings a bell with his mind

might *storm your covered way with bramble,*

or like cymbals have feet, Michigan will winter.

And in the spring, if at the riverbank
if shipbuilding and dunescape, there's a fishery,

The sun can but little avail.

Gary L. McDowell is the poetry editor of *Third Coast*. His poems have appeared recently or are forthcoming in *Colorado Review*, *Controlled Burn*, *Copper Nickel*, *DIAGRAM*, *New England Review*, *Ninth Letter*, *The Pinch*, *RHINO*, *Salt Hill*, *The Southeast Review*, and others. He is also the co-editor, with F. Daniel Rzicznek, of the forthcoming essay and poem anthology, *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Prose Poetry: Contemporary Poets in Discussion and Practice* (Rose Metal Press, 2010). He has been nominated several times for a Pushcart Prize and is pursuing his Ph.D. in American Literature at Western Michigan University.

“I’ve never lived anywhere with a front porch, though I’d like to think that the back patios I’ve had at every apartment I’ve rented have acted like front porches. We grilled, drank, laughed, wrote, read, and generally enjoyed the hell out of those slabs of dirty concrete. Often times I wished we were sitting in a nice, screened-in porch attached to the front of the building so we could watch traffic and see the sun set (every apartment I’ve ever lived in has faced west...weird). I’ve recently become a father for the first time (September 1, 2008), and though I’m not a Lonestar fan, I think the chorus to their popular song, ‘Front Porch View,’ seems rather relevant here: ‘There’s a carrot top who can barely walk, with a sippy cup of milk / A little blue eyed blonde with shoes on wrong, / cus she likes to dress herself / And the most beautiful girl, holding both of them / Yeah the view I love the most / Is my front porch looking in.’ Well, my son has brown hair and is far too young to dress himself, but you get the idea. If only I had a front porch to look in from...but the concrete slab will do just fine.”