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His Holy Temples

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His Holy Temples

Dave Schelbaas

All semester they drifted
in and out of lectures and discussions,
sleeping, dreaming, scoring
last minute touchdowns,
hypnotized by golden calves
or marbled biceps.
But now they are madly writing,
their mouths pulled taut, minds moving like lightening,
their pens more slowly than their minds—
back and forth, back and forth across the bluebook page.
They have never been more focused
in their lives. They stare at their papers,
at the ceiling, scratch noses and ears,
blow on fingers, sniff and sniff and sniff.
No one smiles.
Dressed in ragged blue-jeans, they scratch
their scraggly beards, smooth their shower-wet hair.
“Beautiful,” I think as I watch them, “they are so beautiful,
in this moment, so full of hope, so pure in heart.”
I want to tell them
“You will never be more alive
than you are right now,”
tell them, “This attempt to make from all the stuff of your mind
a hard clear prose that shines and illumines
like the ice on the branches outside the window,
this very action—not the grade you get,
or the career you some day find—but this
order that you bring from roiling chaos,
this creation, is the purpose of your
education.”
But I merely fold my hands and whisper,
“The Lord is in his Holy Temple,
Let all the Earth keep silence before him.”