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Polonius Syndrome

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The Polonius Syndrome

John Van Rys

I'm convinced some days
I'm becoming Polonius,
in fiction fixed—
art without matter
manner without heart.

I feel his rich robes, my body
grown portly, fingers ringed
to the tips, scratching at
waxy ears. His courtly countenance
becomes me—though jaws flap
their jowls destined to join
chapfallen Yorick, his face
fleshless. I am a mask
over an ape's grin, dingy
yellowed fangs bared—bestly behavior,
don't you know?

A preacher of truth to his self, he would
be an infomercial today, with stylish
Danish accent, a self-help program,
available on cassette or VHS—the price
his soul and yours. Buyer beware.

True to his self he was—sneak,
meddler, scolder of queens, a Jephthah
to a loving daughter, a rat slain
while couched behind a bedchamber arras—
an ass.

Who am I, though,
to talk? True to my self I am
too often. Sick I am of the tidy
equation of my asinine self. Come,
let us seek together, crushed
between opposing forces,
the unsettling Way
of the Other.