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Inside Out

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Inside Out

by John Van Rys

Where in the world does one locate a soul?
boardroom, bedroom, or back alley—church pew
perhaps? Can one compute them—many, few,
enough? Is each buried deep, a blind mole?
What is it? animal, vegetable, mineral?
body-freed spirit? pin dancer? A clue,
manna from heaven, please. Does it rise like dew
on grass, quenching, or burn the tongue, a coal?

Own I one? Do I boast a gland
secreting soul testosterone that drives
me with true macho grit to grapple death
to life? Or is mine canned, tuna bland,
chicken from life's sea? Fill, when you arrive,
my vacancy. Musty rooms need sweet breath.

Nether Regions

by John Van Rys

Traffic at the portable toilets
made me tremble. So much to do,
so little time, so much noise
overflowing fiberglass walls.

The trick is to finesse it, feline
wise—while feeling like a defrocked
reverend. Exit with a cat's gait—
and stare, unhurried, face fixed.

Prudery looped tight in a belt notch,
my parched belly burbling
by the vegetable trays, trembling
at the soup tureens—O salivary glands!

“Fine wedding feast”—I spit it out—
under the tent under the weather. Water, wine
a kidney's corn ucopia. Two fingers adjust underwear,
unnoticed, beneath polite pants, zippered shut.

O for a narcotic to salve burdened bowels
and a brackish bladder! I nix that naughty
appetite, drag my grub self past ripened flesh,
get my portable organs to the backed up line—
a gutless gargoyle waiting to grace a lavatory.