

from Juked #7, Spring 2010

TWO POEMS FOR DELMORE SCHWARTZ

1

Leave it to the faulty compass to walk us  
straight into nightmare, all the mechanical birds  
in need of grease, making such a conundrum  
for the pigeon, his idiot beak  
paradiddling a second line for my pulse,  
when all it ever wanted was to march  
in casual fornication, methodical as Brahms  
on a winter Sunday. And yes, Johannes,  
we *will* weigh ourselves before and after the auto de fé.

Longing has a substance. Set apart,  
wandering, forlorn as coal dust,  
each living thorn outstretched.  
Is a touch among the Hallmarks, a ravishing  
among the kitsch, all it takes  
to know *the wire in the rose is beautiful?*

2

Every voice in the airport speakers testifies  
like fish who've been born again.  
And we too, late for San Francisco, belated for  
Baudelaire, didn't care for much  
else but gin. Hotheaded we were,  
incapable of a cool afternoon.  
It was disgusting to see the hydrant turned on a crowd  
who were screaming, admirably, that

fire opens the closed language of the library.  
While we, the quieter race,  
a softer music filled and filled  
like rain falling into the shallow sea  
where fishermen smoked and blinked  
waiting for a rose to enter their lives.  
So cold out in the frozen speech.  
And her quilt was to render thorns.