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Making Literature Conference

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Various Poems

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Various Poems

On work:

what they told me

they called it
a dead-end job
said don't ever
go there
get stuck flipping burgers

said food service workers
were assholes
move in
lower circles
don't ever be friends

but I found
beating hearts
and respect
and the assholes
were always the customers

the uniform

black pants
non-slip shoes
a company
t-shirt
apron
hat
anonymity
with a name tag

Tommy

there he was, scrawny
in his sagging pants

working nights to get himself
through college

taught him sandwiches
and coworker gossip

left him in the back
doing bacon trays

he was quiet first day
but his grin showed his braces

Working food service on holidays

New Year's Eve
but the customers still come
so we don party hats
over headsets
a mockery
of freedom
and hope the glitter
doesn't fall off
on their fries

New Year's Day

New Year's Day
and a coworker doesn't show
doesn't answer his phone
last seen at 4 am
dropped off
at a hotel

the rest of us carry on
like this is just another day

On school:

Syllabus Shock

The slam of a syllabus on my desk hit my heart
The fifth time that week
17 credits jumped in my backpack all at once
And already slumped my shoulders

Just last week I was digging toes into sand
Waves lapping over feet
The sun was crouching on the edge of the horizon
And a breeze caressed my shoulders

Now these corridors crowded with shuffling students
These lectures droning on
I can't see why I returned to this madness
Till I stand on giants' shoulders

The Magnificat

Sing out my soul.

The fog hung heavy
Like in Canterbury
As we made our pilgrimage
To the woods.

Sing out my soul.

Bare branches arched above
Drawing eyes to heaven.
The solemn lights of campus
Drifted past the trees.

Sing out and glorify the Lord God

For this refuge from the coffee,
The classrooms, the chaos.

Oxford Mud

If I acted on dares
I'd leave the coffee and grades
Put the books on the shelf
Catch a flight across the pond

Take a cab to Paddington
Hop a train bound north
Slump against the window
Let the city slip away

I'd watch the wind ripple through the grass
Fields edged by moss-covered trees
While sheep huddle against the rain
And hills roll into the distance

The spires of Oxford would loom through haze
And I'd wander into Christchurch meadows
Boathouses lining the River Thames
Where it saunters past on its way back to Town

I'd duck inside the Eagle and Child
Red Oxford mud clinging to my boots
A shepherd's pie in the Rabbit Room
The weight of glory on my heart

I'd attempt reading poetry
Drowned out by student gossip
Their loud irreverent language
Rendering Tolkien's words archaic

So I'd return to cobbled streets
Where fog had crawled in with the night
Stroll toward the Church of St Mary
See a lion, a fawn, a lamppost