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"The 30th Birthday" and "Paraphrasing Iraq"

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The 30th Birthday

Death flicks my ear
with his stubby finger

as he moseys out the door

and into the garden.
Fatty clouds, sticky

and white, roll along

like cakes on God's
blue conveyor belt.

Death picks his teeth,

and takes a pee behind
the bushes, winks at you.

The relic buried beneath

the elm is your shinbone.
Or maybe it's mine.

Caret initio et fine.

I'm wearing a hat
with a little propeller on top.

You are on your knees

near the back porch:
a spade in one hand,

a Twinkie in the other.

Even The End
has to end sometime,

says the Buddha.

Or was that the
neighbor lady peeking

over the fence?

No matter:
I've only got one candle,

and the wind is ready to rise.

Paraphrasing Iraq

Take, for instance,
this secret—

 windbanked
and woundwashed:

Take this promise,

 (for example)
 a cartridge of words
 the dead load and lock and
load again:

And take this province of accretion:

 skin mapped, flagged,
 wired for hum and hush—

 these phrases:

 unbuckled and broken,
spread out
 here
among our rewards.

Everything ordnanced—

Morning's drab holster

 empty and empty and empty again:

There are nouns for this:

 ways to say it,
Sounds the body makes,
Shapes that vowels twist the body into.

Where the word ends

 avulsion begins.

Dean Rader

Dean Rader's work has appeared in *POOL*, *Parthenon West Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Common Ground*. He has won the *Crab Creek Review* poetry prize, and is working to finish his first book of poems, *Works + Days*. He is featured on the *Borderlands Web Audio* site.