

Paul Bernstein

Costume Party

For Halloween I dressed up
as myself, molding foil
against my face, layering
paper dipped in paste,
dried and daubed
with paints, mascara,
blush and base to make
the mask a perfect me.
Wrinkled pants and shirt
a size too small, buttons
snapped, old black shoes
with broken heels, fused
into a mirrored mockery
of me to cast a pall across
the unsuspecting world
until my woman
looked, reflected, broke
the glass, seeing me
for what I was,
the way she does
every other day of my life

Paul Bernstein is a self-taught poet whose recent work has appeared in *Blue Lotus Review*, *New Plains Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Front Porch Review*, *Big River Poetry Journal*, *River Poets Review* and *U.S. 1 Worksheets*. He is also a prizewinning amateur country music lyricist. Paul lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he participates regularly in open mic readings.