

Doug Holder

Meeting Allen Ginsberg (Buffalo, NY. 1975)

A middle-aged Jewish uncle
his bald dome
framed by graying locks
a tangled tapestry
draping below
his ears.

The rhythmic slap of his hands
on the drum
his head raised to the ceiling
addressing some light
that only spoke his name.

" If you want to live, live."
" If you want to die, die."
"If you want to make love, make love."

The college radio manager
told me that he was a prophet
that I should interview him,
a boy with impossibly rosy cheeks
a faint mustache
the like that I have seen
on my maiden aunts.

I walked up to him
my shambling gait
the gone-to-seed
crowd around him
snickered at this
not yet defiled cherub
as I shook his hand
a hand I
never,
really
let go
of.

Doug Holder teaches English at Bunker Hill Community College. He is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press, and is the arts/editor for *The Somerville Times*. His latest book of verse is *Last Night at the Wursthau* (Grey Sparrow Press)