

Doug Holder – Two Poems

I Tried to Frame a River

I had an attractive frame
but it came apart at the seams.

Everything seemed flimsy.
It was an upstream battle.

It refused
to be hung out
to dry...
on some museum wall.

And fish jumped
on musical scales
doing a jitterbug
on the newly polished floor.

I ripped,
and stripped
the canvas
from its mount
and washed
it down the sink.

It seemed
to fit so well
not even a ripple
it was one with the current--
A stream?
yes that's it....
of enlightened consciousness.
a fluid wave of abstract brilliance.

No they said
"It is a river,"
so reluctantly
I just let it flow...

Every Family Has an Odd Uncle

He arrives from the city
a bald head
a subversive walrus mustache
something about
his urban swagger
such a welcomed exotic fish
in the tame, dank
suburban water.

Your family speaks
to you eye to eye
but his are slits and shifty
he speaks aggressively
from either side
of a Cheshire cat grin.

He knows
the state you are in.

He told you
he never looked back
when he left his home,
"Remember kid you are on your own."

And he left in a huff
with a whiff
of pot-scented breeze
your father
lamented:
"Never know what's
up that guy's sleeve."

His figure vanishes
behind the tastefully appointed
Autumnal trees.

You shout,
(restrained by
the mock colonial
front door)

"Come back, Come back, please!"

Doug Holder is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press. His work has appeared in the *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Poetry Motel*, *the Endicott Review*, *Raintown Review*, *Spoonful* and many others. He teaches writing at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, MA and Endicott College in Beverly, MA. He holds an M.A. in English and American Language from Harvard University.