

## **Doug Holder-- Two Poems**

### **In My Mind I Swam to Spectacle Island**

On the Boston Harbor Island ferry  
our guide  
told us about Deer Island  
aptly named  
a temporary haven  
for deer  
as they swam to escape  
the trap jaws of wolves.

Now  
a sewage dump  
a treatment plant  
a mole  
festering in the water.

The ancient, escapist deer  
of course  
would eventually succumb  
to a well-appointed  
hunter's trap or  
some deep wound  
that ran as wildly  
as they did.

In my mind  
I swam to  
Spectacle Island  
the ferry  
a prop  
a figment in the ether  
I was hoofing  
it like a deer  
through the harbor's choppy waters.

Reacquainted with silence  
on a park bench  
surrounded by  
preening dandelions  
looking  
out at the eruption  
of Boston's skyline  
and all these predators  
just waiting for me.

## **I Am Willy Loman**

I hear my wife say,  
"Attention must be paid....,"  
as I carried my heavy bags  
each bag weighing down  
my round shoulders  
to her face.

" They love me, they love me in Somerville,"  
I said to myself,  
the wind's hollow howl  
the cat's wide-eyed shock  
his questioning meow

as I went out  
to a 5AM cold.

I had my shoes shined the other day  
and pressed the threads  
on my threadbare jacket

ready to plaster a smile  
on my tired face  
to shoot the same old shit  
another round of pitches  
bombast and bluster

for a few  
brittle bones.

Sometimes those voices reappear--  
My father  
grabbing his morning vodka  
from the icebox  
" I think I failed you,"  
he said.  
Captured in dementia  
and the maudlin.

It is another night  
with Canadian Club  
humming  
under my breath  
to Chet Baker's  
" Let's Get Lost."

My cat  
pounces on imaginary prey  
and so do I.  
I sip  
and my night  
will slip  
to another  
inevitable day.

**Doug Holder** teaches writing at Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, MA and Endicott College in Beverly, MA. For over 30 years he has run poetry groups for patients at McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA. Holder is Arts/Editor for *The Somerville Times*, and director of the Newton Free Library Poetry Series in Newton, Mass. His work has appeared in *Poesy*, *Rattle*, *Cafe Review*, *the new renaissance* and many others.