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Silly Little Word

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Two Poems

Charles Henry

RUNNER-UP, THOMAS McGRATH AWARD FOR POETRY

Charles Henry is a second semester English M.A. student at UND, with interests in composition theory, sociolinguistics, and the early modern and medieval British periods. He received his undergraduate in English and Education at West Liberty University, where he also began his creative writing journey. His writings often deal with exploring the underside of the expected experience of language and examining the shifting forms and conventions of writing. Charles has lived all over the eastern U.S., originally growing up on a farm in the Ohio valley, and he enjoys bringing those experiences into his writing.

On Charles' poetry, the Creative Writing Scholarship Committee observed: "In his poems, Charles approaches the substance of everyday living with candor, warmth, and sensitivity. His poems make deft use of enjambment, indentations, and the silence between stanzas to invite us to meditate, in comfortable silence, with the speakers of his poems."

Silly Little Word

Where is that word,
 that I just had in my head?
 Ah! It found its way to the page,
 by going through my fingers.
 Silly little verb,
 always doing something.
 But, I'm not sure I like what it's doing.
 So, I picked it up and threw it on the floor
 Then grabbed it back up
 to see if it could become something more.
 I rolled in my hand,
 to see if I could give it a sense of self,
 and all of the sudden it became something else.
 An adjective!
 ...that's fun,
 but not quite what I need.

Next, I gave it a bend, but it broke in two;
that's not what I was trying to do.
Infinitives don't give a sense of who.
So I taped it together and gave it a stretch.
Stretched it right into a gerund,
but the word wasn't quite there and...
I wanted something closer to a name.
Frustrated I let out a sigh, picked it up, and held it to my eye.
And pled,
"Help me, silly word, I need something profound."
It jumped from my hand,
back onto the page.
And when I looked down,
I was surprised at what I found.
The little thing had bent itself into a noun.
"Ah, yes of course!
That there is just the thing.
What a good team, you and me."
Then I smiled.
How flexible that silly little word can be.