



anyway. You laugh again in tones  
I can't interpret, let alone catch  
on canvas. My painterly self  
died years ago anyway, leaving  
a few watercolors, one smut oil.

Now your real estate empire  
supports our worst habits, those  
having nothing to do with drugs,  
sex, alcohol, sports or the arts.  
We should hire someone to fix  
those doors, clean away the soot,  
haul those car parts to the dump.  
We should decide if those waxwings  
are cedar or bohemian. Then  
we should gather up that glitter  
of mind and tuck it away  
where the damp won't corrode it,  
preserving it like that unborn  
but excessively love-wrought child.

*Bree Rolfe*

### Dogs Driving Humans

She'll meet him on the Riverwalk.

The bartender points out

it's ten miles long and perhaps

he'll need a more specific plan.

And maybe, in the interest of time,  
because he's an airman on furlough,  
he should pick a more precise location.

The bartender walks over to the map  
on the wall, drags his fingers

across the length of the river—

the gesture is exaggerated,



but his point is well made.

In a voice that suggests he might've  
been a tour guide on one of those boats  
that crawl the river, he explains the high  
points and characteristics of the various sections.  
Proving his point that if a girl says,  
*meet me on the Riverwalk* and nothing  
more, it is certainly very possible

that they may never find each other.

The airman says he's waiting for Seymour,  
who was supposed to have a date,

but she bailed. When Seymour arrives,  
they tickle each other, down more beers  
and forget to close their tab.

A man walks into a bar and says—

*I'm not interested in making new friends,  
unless you want to suck my dick.*

*Not literally. Please don't touch my dick.*

“Wonderwall” on the radio and Slamantonios  
all around. He continues, *Your hair is amazing.  
I'm not a big fan of your hair tonight.  
Stop using man made irons on it.  
Use oil and love. I'm a bit of a dick.*

There should be a term for this:

drunk, overly aggressive dude in the bar

who bothers everyone, until he is thrown out.  
And when he's gone, there is collective

sigh of relief and everyone bonds

about his absence. Kind of like

there's a term for *basic bitch* or *gold-digger*.

When the airmen come back to close out  
their forgotten tab, they say to me, “Goodbye  
mysterious lady,” or “Goodbye serious lady.”



and although they say it twice, I can't catch  
which it was. The bartender plays

the Shins, and for that, I am grateful.

Outside, two dogs, in a vintage Chevrolet,  
wait for their owners to finish their beers.  
They stare out the front window,

their begging, betrayed eyes, unmoving.  
Labradors propped up behind the wheel,  
a practical joke where we humans  
pretend the dogs are the ones driving.

At the benefit for the college radio station I feel like Eric  
Stolz

in the Rules of Attraction, except I don't  
want 19-year-olds to blow me.

Their college bands. The short shorts.  
The sleeveless concert tees  
revealing side boob.

That friend of the hipster girl

who seems, from her outfit,  
to have been promised more

than these mustached, tall boy  
drinking drummers and bassists.

We had plans once, but we let them die.  
You doled out water in thimble fulls

and accused me of over watering.



*If it comes out the bottom, then it's too much*

But if it drains out, it's no longer  
in the soil, so how can it hurt?

The decay has been slow.

First the flower, then one brown

leaf after another.

Now, it's just a pot full of dirt

you refuse to throw away.

What I wouldn't give to feel  
like any of it mattered.

To believe I could save myself,

the failing station, the world, even us,  
with noisy guitars and a five-dollar cover.

Looking at friend's photographs of the Salton Sea the  
morning after he killed himself

If landscape acts as message—

Disney TV's with heart shaped buttons,

screens splintered with bullet holes,

leaning on bluish ground, half dug in, half resigned.

On the bland shoreline, water the color of whiskey—  
The shell of an easy chair— reclining

leaning far back like it's about to let go,

about to slump back into the stagnant  
water and sink into stupor.

A washed out yellow house, soon, in graffiti—  
Emblazoned like a warning on its chest.



Its roof a disfigured birthday cake

as if it were baked too long in this ruthless sun.

A row of windows like waiting eyes.

Turn the corner, along the side of the house—

Sun slants, cuts shadows into concrete, while above

curlicue words that stretch, whispering, *everything must end*  
interrupt beach weathered wood.

Trailers peel apart, piled with dismantled chain

link fences— air conditioners invade

sleeping areas. The car that once pulled it, unhitched.

*Melissa Amato*

### Why's Poetry Gotta Be So Sad All The Time

Whys Poetry Gotta Be So sad all the time,

Furreals,

Why do I have to stand behind this mic and pretend to have guys  
troubles,

When I'm pretty sure he took my ass to Red Lobster,

Every night this week.

Whys poetry gotta be so sad,

Poetry, I was once told, was a window to the gates of Heaven,

Even though I had abandoned that years ago,

For I found someone that took me in like Ram through the fire,

And if I did bad today,

Karma only affects your next life,