

Poet Begging on Subway Car

by Jerry Ratch

The subway train pulled up and I shuffled on board.
I announced to the whole subway car: "I'm a poet."
And that was all I needed to do. It was like a miracle.
Someone got up immediately and gave me her seat.
People got in an orderly line and began opening their wallets.
Dollar bills came fluttering out like moths.
One older gentleman offered to buy my book of poems,
Insisting on paying full price, plus tax. He added a tip.
Someone else gave me her sandwich.
Another her food stamps.
And finally, I struck the mother of all prizes,
Way better than the Nobel Award:
I was offered a room to sleep
At the Walt Whitman Rest Home for Poets.
And I realized it had all paid off, in spades,
And I was set for life, as I had hoped.

