

# All These Poets

*by* Darryl Price

All these poets with their hands  
Full of poems are driving  
Me into the wheat fields like  
A flock of crows. They offer  
You a cigarette and light  
The damn thing with a poem.

They give you a little dance,  
But when they take off their clothes  
Poems are stuck to their feet  
Like blades of grass. All their lips  
Taste like poems dipped into old  
Barbecue sauce. They trail with

You after butterflies or leaping on poor  
Fireflies, but when it comes time  
To free all the prisoners  
Their keys will only unlock  
A chest full of more poems.  
What's wrong, they will say, don't you

Like poetry? Eyelashes  
Wink, but the closer you look  
The more you make out the ends  
Are fastened with small poems.  
Earrings are acrobats with  
Poems to be handed out

Like flyers to the breathless thrilled to death  
Crowds clamoring below the bleachers. They'll invite you

Over for dinner, but your  
Fork and knife will have been replaced  
By rolled up poems, tied with  
Typed out blurbs. These poets don't

Believe in poetry as  
A way of life, of being  
Awake, they see it as a  
Fabulous job and they must  
Get there first for, or die trying.  
All these poets want you to

Swallow their words without chewing.  
Without thinking. Without  
Buttoning or unbuttoning. Without feeling further  
For the poor souls who need it  
The most. Without so much as  
A thank you for the sacrificial listen.

Bonus poem:

The Ragged Stars Spit Their Stained Wooden Teeth on the Soggy  
Ground  
by Darryl Price

on belts upon the cold slice of my clouds  
like sopping poor man's curtains. I can't help  
this hill. You get to climb into someone's  
friendly valley lap and sleep. I can't help  
these flopping, wounded birds trying to fly  
through dirt like sick frogs. I've got my tiny  
skeleton scarf to drag myself with, but

you've got each other. I've got my parched hands  
stuffed in my pockets like missing scars, but  
you've got more than yesterday's tears. I did  
not get to forget. I've got my Captain  
wherever I go, but you've got your steel  
army of polished fingers lifting you  
to safety above the splashing norm. I've  
got my lonely window full of dreams, full

of blowing leaves, but you've got your apples  
like new pink erasers in a basket  
of no wrong. I've got my songs in my head  
like shadows that came apart. I'll never  
see you again. I've got my electric  
wires, it's all trees on a slope. I've got a  
diamond soul, but you've got a paid for  
future, no matter the burned out sorrow on my brow.

