

TWO POEMS

PETER E. MURPHY

Foreclosure

Used to be I could get anything I wanted
delivered to my door in 24 hours.
Now my closets are full of smoke,
and I am showing symptoms

of anonymous fever. I hear the laugh
track of adventure capitalists
flaunting their new talking dogs.
I lose sleep, gain weight and confuse

the death toll with the death tax.
I've become obsessed with the online poll
to assassinate the president
and the blunt force drama

Peter E. Murphy was born in Wales and grew up in New York City where he operated heavy equipment, managed a night club, and drove a cab. He is the author of *Stubborn Child*, a finalist for the 2006 Paterson Poetry Prize, and a chapbook of poems, *Thorough & Efficient*, both from Jane Street Press. His poems and essays have appeared in *The Atlanta Review*, *American Book Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Commonweal*, *Cortland Review*, *The Journal*, *The Literary Review*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *The Shakespeare Quarterly*, *The New York Times*, *Witness*, and many other publications. In addition to receiving a 2009 Poetry Fellowship from the New Jersey Council on the Arts, he has received awards and fellowships from The Atlantic Center for the Arts, The Folger Shakespeare Library, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, The National Endowment for the Humanities, Yaddo, and the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars. Retired from teaching English and creative writing at Atlantic City High School, he directs the annual Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway in Cape May and other programs for poets, writers, and teachers.

it inflicts on the soul.

When I suffered from restless prick
syndrome, I excused myself by thinking
I needed more, but that was before

I understood dying gracefully is a myth.
After a lunch of Peace and Happiness
noodles, I digest my paper fortune,
Good luck with your tumor,

which would be funny if it were funny.
God bless. God damn. Don't let it end
like this. Let me do something—
Forgive me. I've never felt better.

Good Grief

I wake from a nap where I dreamt I was crucified
upside down to find night has already fallen.
Like Edison, I am afraid of the dark.
Below the slot in my front door, a pile of envelopes—
A direct mail Jesus urges me to pray and donate.
Transunion wants to sell me my credit score.
Facing History insists I consider my moral choices.
I let my newspaper go when it misprinted
controlled *thought* as controlled *throughout*.
On television a bee wrangler deconstructs
why the queen is kept fat and happy at the expense
of workers who produce honey. Marx might object,
but didn't he say, *I'm not a Marxist?*
Einstein, *I don't believe in mathematics?*
Every three seconds someone writes a poem about love.
Six times an hour a dog gets hit by a car.
In seventeen minutes somebody else will be killed by a gun.
It's hard to remember that Amazon used to be a river.
The last time I felt this way this long Death stopped
at several houses in the neighborhood to ask for something sweet.
I want to believe the sun is a star and we spin around it.
I want to believe I have a soul that whirls on after death.
I want to believe that Marx at the Royal Buffet
would go light on the soup and rice, stuffing himself
instead on crab legs, pork, a heaping plate of the jumbo shrimp.