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If I Were the World's Greatest Poet

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IF I WERE THE WORLD'S GREATEST POET,

Renée Beaudoin

ideas and images would explode in vibrant colors
and blinding flares of light, spotting my vision
as they bashed against my skull
clamoring to be freed from the confines of my primitive mind.
They would leak from fissures of gray matter,
flow like quicksilver
past each other in droves as they shot
down my spine through my shoulder down my arm and hand leaping
from my fingertips to my pen in a streaming spark of ingenuity.

If I were the world's greatest poet,
words would trip over each other as they flee my body and
impose themselves upon the paper. The cascading words
would hardly pause for breath as they near the end
of the page, but would blaze to a fresh stretch of whiteness
and continue racing, undeterred.

If I were one of the world's amateur poets,
ink would flow like blood from my pen,
spilling over the thin, flimsy paper in frantic, seamless strokes,
illegible to uncomprehending eyes,
scandalous gibberish to blind minds—
But still I would bleed and ink would run, indifferent
to the life draining from me
as it spilled upon the page.

If I were one of the world's amateur poets,
the pen would succumb to the weight of my hand; it would snap
and splatter across the tabletop, leaving me bleeding
with no way to channel my life-force. I would flee
to the computer and pound away at the keyboard
eyes wide and unblinking as I stare at the harsh screen,
while my blood pooled around the keys,
making them sticky and slick and smeared with scarlet.

If I were the world's worst poet,
I would write unceasingly, striking the keys with curled fingers,
typing my bloody words, gasping,
until I was drained dry. Then,
ink staining my hands, blood smearing the keyboard, I would

collapse. I would crumple to the floor as the last of my words,
the last of my spirit, ran dry,
leaving me a bloody husk.
I would be satisfied in my final moments
and then I would die.