

2019

Weight, Weight: Don't Tell Me

Theodore Wampuszyc
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate>

Recommended Citation

Wampuszyc, Theodore (2019) "Weight, Weight: Don't Tell Me," *The Laureate*: Vol. 18 , Article 18.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol18/iss1/18>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Laureate by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.

Footer Logo

Weight, Weight: Don't Tell Me
Theodore Wampuszyc

After the cuff loosens on my arm and the
thermometer slips out from under my tongue
It's out of the chair and
onto my feet and

onto a little gray platform
that will spit out a three-digit number that will
tell me what I'm worth.
Or, maybe they'll just ask me
"What Do You Weigh?"
Oh, Christ. Let slip the dogs of war.

Despite the fact that no stethoscope presses its
frigid thumbprint to my chest,
I take a deep breath and try to remember
What do I weigh?

As much as five boxes of cat litter bought in bulk
To bring to the shelter on Tuesdays and Saturdays
Or a little less than three kids, because

In between the microchipping, cat-smooching,
And endless sweeping at the shelter
I tutor on
Mondays
And that weighs something too.

My weight in books would never be enough,
Because more than the "too many breads" and the
"too many sweets,"
Yes, more than those, I swallow endless words

And disgorge them by pen and by keyboard alike
A thousand stories in my belly
Either written or yet unborn
And what must that weigh?

It's all just one measurement on the costumer's
sheet of many
When they fit me in armor,
Or naval slacks, or spritely wings,

Denim, flannel, leather, tulle,
It's cut-sewn-buttoned, made for me
And in this heart are a dozen writers' plays
Pressing down on this scale

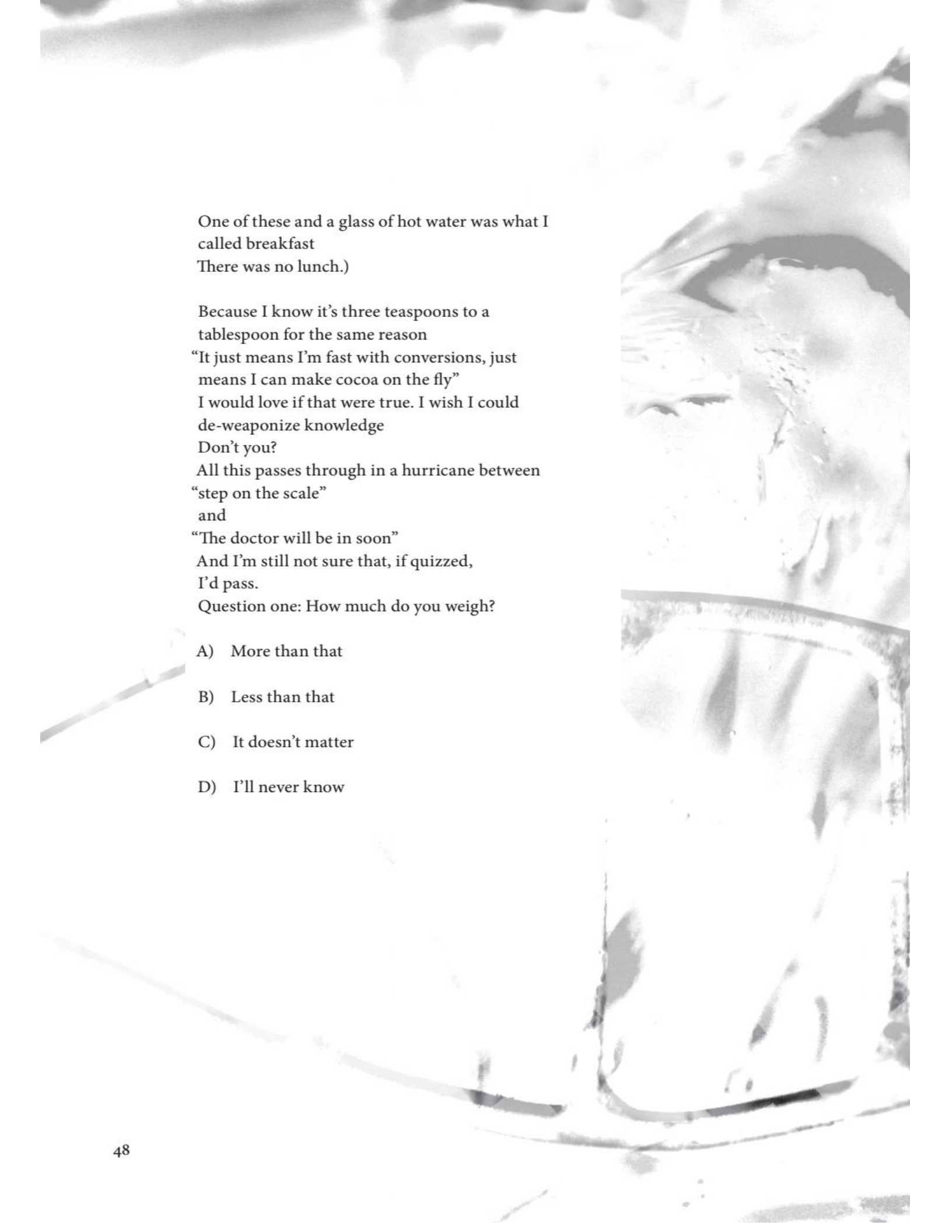
Bouncing the needle higher, ever higher, it
seems.

As a child I loved dragons
And in high school I played the xylophone
So it's not all scales that fill me with dread
Maybe that's why it's high, I reason—the dread
pulls me down.
Or the phone in my pocket? The soles on my boots?
I could cut my hair or trim my nails or strip off
my clothes or tear off my skin to ease the number
lower lower lower lower....

Numbers are the worst part
Because this number will be in my head all day
week month year

Because even now after almost a decade of alleged
recovery
I still remember how many calories are in the bags
of Doritos served in my middle school
cafeteria:

(160 in the Nacho Cheese, 10 fewer if you opt
for the Cool Ranch



One of these and a glass of hot water was what I
called breakfast
There was no lunch.)

Because I know it's three teaspoons to a
tablespoon for the same reason
"It just means I'm fast with conversions, just
means I can make cocoa on the fly"
I would love if that were true. I wish I could
de-weaponize knowledge
Don't you?
All this passes through in a hurricane between
"step on the scale"
and
"The doctor will be in soon"
And I'm still not sure that, if quizzed,
I'd pass.
Question one: How much do you weigh?

- A) More than that
- B) Less than that
- C) It doesn't matter
- D) I'll never know