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## Ode to Rod McKuen

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KATY NEWBERG

## ODE TO ROD MCKUEN

Suddenly I spot you—  
crouched among the milkweeds.  
Rushing to your side, I kneel  
and discover what I knew not before—  
you're dead.  
We embrace and kiss passionately.  
We are one.  
Drawing apart, the shredded skin  
from my chapped lips  
gets caught in your braces.  
Oh God—how beautiful!  
Whilst lying there, side by side,  
we look up, and ponder our fates  
upon the cotton clouds of hope.  
You are my Antony and I your Cleopatra.  
Against the empty candy wrappers of time  
we stand out, you and I, as  
two fresh Willy Wonka bars.  
Later, we know we must go,  
but find ourselves somehow pulled back, restrained.  
We talk of many things—  
love, hate, mankind's future, and solve  
the infinite mystery of life.  
At last, we are released  
and walk home, hand in hand,  
as the crickets chirp of our departure,  
and the wind whistles through the reeds,  
to bid us good-bye.