

Bobbie R. Coleman

Danny's Birthday

Cold November fog
rolled the cherry-top in
the night Danny
got busted

Cops' flashlights
were candles
on the birthday cake
that waited at home
for us to yell
"Surprise!"
"Happy Twenty-One!"

No streamers
hung in the black-and-white
just the dime-bag
he'd sold to the under-
cover informer

His birthday card
the marked ten she'd slipped him
that read under blacklight
"HAHA YOUR CAUGHT"
sold and bought

Cellmates
slept through the party
city jail catered metal-
tray dinner for one
tin-cup water
instead of champagne

Lawyers
Never much fun anyway
told him plead guilty
and the judge
presented the gift:
Three years probation
and not even wrapped.