

American Academy of Poets Winner -- Randall Hinson

Perfect Saturday Night

Looked out through the window
with paint on the pane,
the phone on my shoulder,
your voice
trails off
between brush strokes
and the hiss
of interference
through the line.

You have a headache too.
You miss him at night.
But the work keeps you busy,
Lonely.
So what about coffee?
In the same cafe by the tracks
where you go
two, three times a day,
just to break monotony.

You can smoke in the bar
and run into the cab driver
who sometimes gets the check
so you'll talk with him.
Their plywood walls.
The popcorn machine.
A jelly omelette and coffee.

Later, we can go bowling
with six of your friends.
They'll call up the girl
who closes her eyes

and talks,
wears her 100% silk shirt
on backwards.
Maurice who rides
a bicycle. He'll show
you his broken sculpture
of melted crayon wax.

Tonight,
we'll score over 70,
pile in the two door
of the boy with a lead patch,
cancer in his eyes,
and get stoned.
You can look out
the steamy window
at the storm drain,
pissing on the hood,
feel my heart beating faster...

By five when I leave,
you'll be too tired
to remember him.
You'll run out of records
to play, things
to paint. Go
wash the lipstick
from your face.

Tomorrow,
we'll meet again
at the cafe, for vanilla cokes,
and hot fudge sundaes.