

## Michael Todd Steffen – Two Poems

### My Problem

I've written you letters  
with no address for the envelope,  
with thoughts—confidences!—the symptoms  
you disguise yourself in—biting  
your nails, overeating, falling  
for love on the net—could be rightsized  
by unwinding your skein  
of sudden desires and a tilted past.

I've come away from  
therapists, groups and meetings  
with certificates and tokens saying I could  
sidestep your molehills—  
only again day after day to find myself  
in the elevations of attitude,  
on the islands of prickly fruit  
grousing about the prices, the wait,  
bearing my teeth at others  
with their deplorable hair and manners.

Only to have them—*What's  
your problem?*—invoke you anew  
and remind me  
everybody drinks the same water.

With your sniff dreaming a rib bone  
from the takeout bag being kicked around  
by the wind; snapping at  
the wind's hand, biting your fingernails,

drifting again into the blind spot  
of your oncome; with your dispersal  
of asking, flirt, maker, provocateur  
of *No, Huh-uh, Get lost*—

and author of the shrug  
that breaks like sunlight  
out of nights and days of rain  
so here and there an afternoon

I am put out  
and you vanish  
like water  
into the green flag of the grass.

### **Mac & Cheese in a Microwave**

Some days it's all I can do  
tired of sandwiches, finding  
leftovers from the holiday table  
to be surprised and thankful

and child-sized with my one  
and only menu for lunch—  
runny in elbows. Clogged in shells.  
Portioned with heft enough for the blind

molecular model Wilson's ant  
of economy, however. The trick  
I've learned, to heat by increments,  
stir, heat, stir as the bowl

goes around and comes back  
around. Among small discreet answers  
to a prayer for everyone: air, water,  
carbs (don't tell) in adherent dairy.

**Michael Todd Steffen** is the recipient of a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship. His poetry has appeared in journals, including *The Boston Globe*, *The Concord Saunterer*, *Constellations*, *The Dark Horse*, *E-Verse Radio*, *Ibbetson Street*, *The Lyric* and *Poem*. His second book, *On Earth As It Is*, will be published in 2022 by Cervena Barva Press.