

We Don't Need No Education

by Bill Yarrow

You were sitting with your vexed complexion,
your dour shoulders, your hoarse aloneness
in the front row of my English for Unwed Mothers
class, and I hadn't yet read your essay on "Miscarriages
of Injustice," nor had you read Montaigne's "That Men
Are Justly Punished for Being Obstinate in the Defense
of a Fort That Is Not in Reason To Be Defended," and it
wasn't yet Thursday 2004 when we would be sitting
on the curb in front of The Sikh Community Café
where you were telling me, "The body is a lost temple
of bliss and blister," and the smile on my face was palpably
inapt, and I blurted out, "There's an ill energy that emanates
from your precise heart that I find attractive," to which
you replied, editing me with a surgeon's cruel disinterest,
"You mean it's an attractive ill energy," and I said, "Yes,
that's what I mean," though that wasn't at all what I meant,
and the sun was pursuing the moon in an ineffable dance
of unlikelihood and redress, and you were wearing
your father's shoes though I remember thinking what
large feet you had, learning later that that was unfair
and untrue, learning later that your heart, like all hearts,
was fuzzy, not precise, that your candor was a sham,
that you were neither a mother nor unmarried, that my
interest in you was not interest at all but usury, that I was
a man not in full but in fullishness, a false Montaigne,
whose chin beard, though elegant, was the merest bravado.

