

Balloon Seller

by Mathew Paust

I learned his real name this morning
found it on Wiki: Royal Doulton item HN479
eBay prices in the hundreds
we called our plaster copy simply
Balloon Man

Conceived in my father's celebration of bathos
painted by my mother with meticulous attention to his
critical interest
skin color and shading their singular aesthetic collaboration
giving me an early intimation of a Giacometti agony

My father's extravagant vocal quaver when he'd say
Balloon Man
seemed a peremptory admonishment
with empathy obliging diligence
Balloon Man sits on a shelf, bracing my self-published books

