

She Called My Poem Nice

by Jack Varnell

She thought it complimentary
but to me, its tired thin veil
pierced, and piercing,
revealed disappointment.

It was decided right then,
I'd show her nice.

With every effort, her hollow praise
included undertones of,
"There is no future in art,
you will not change lives
with flowery words.
Please don't rock the boat"

In living that, keeping the promise to myself,
the politics of it all resulted in nine steps up.
Counted, because I couldn't see them.

Nine up to the stage to accept the award
from the blood - thirsty audience
obsessed with my words.

Nine up — an eternity down.

She impassively liked them all.
They were all "good"

She was wrong.
Lives had been changed.
A government morphed into judge and jury.

A community revealed to be sheep based on lies.
Me, taking a fall for being an instigator of truth.
One was led to murder.

The last thing I heard
as the host pulled the lever
was the squeak of metal and wood,
and her wailing.

If she had only taken the time
to understand the poems.

