

# 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

