

# On the Bench (Matthew III)

*by* Mathew Paust

He's in the shade  
under the station portico at Bay Transport,  
the usual hanging head  
as if asleep on the bench;  
too late to sneak around behind.

He'll look up in an instant,  
win the day;  
but you're not easy, you slow your pace,  
step with care, do your cat walk,  
turn your face.

Something glimpsed stays with you:  
the wisp coiling from his fingers;  
you stop, stand awhile, he could be gone;  
you stoop, ease away the smoldering butt,  
replace it with the dollar.

-- m.d. paust

