

I Used to Be a Literature Major

by XXXX

I remember reading poetry in the library
when I was in college, after skipping
Sociology, Psychology, or Theology.
I remember thinking: What is this nonsense?
I don't want to waste my time on any of this.
These bore me. I don't feel it.
I was promised that if I read this
I would feel something. Is something
wrong with me? Am I stupid?
In poetry class the day before I used
such big words, spoke about such
distinguished critics and writers.
I referenced Greek terms, inclines,
referents, topologies, systems,
paradigms, philosophies, figures—
What now? Why can't I force myself
to feel anything after reading
the sonnets of Pablo Neruda,
the verse of John Donne,
Rilke, Wordsworth, Lorca?
I just want to go home and
masturbate to good pornography,
experience some actual ecstasy.
For the rest of my years I think
I will only pretend to understand
any or all of this.
If they have been reciting these
to themselves and calling it poetry,
these ink-nosed idiots will believe anything.

I think tonight as I shower
I will read the back of the shampoo bottle
while waving my hands
and for the sake of my heart
try to shed some tears.

