

Poetry & Education

Priscila Uppal

My Ovidian Education

After a long respite in the lavatory trying to get my head around
how so many twenty-somethings and a few older ladies
can think of nothing better to say after a presentation on Paul Celan
than "That was deep I guess, was this guy gay?"
I emerge with a blazer as white as chalk dust
and a pencil case as dour as a coffin and looking into the mirror
discover I have aggravatingly beautiful cheeks and deep-set
Firestone tire eyes but a nose with a hook as sharp
as the old hermit in my Renaissance plates dictionary. Under
the neon lights of the chemistry hallway, eating an orange,
a banana, and a box of SunMaid raisins, I would sell my soul
for a student worth Platonizing about and a stack of letters
urging me to adulterize my standards just this once
and leave them all sitting there without a second act after intermission
to their exercises on metaphor and lists of ten questions
to ask of their poems, including "Why should anyone but you
care about what you've written?" and dive off the top
of academe's steeple breaking my nose on the concrete
waiting for the one with the shiniest apple to sing me and Paul back to life.