

Classic Poetry Series

Brooks Haxton

- poems -

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Salesmanship, With Half A Dram Of Tears

Gripping the lectern, rocking it, searching
the faces for the souls, for signs of heartfelt
mindfulness at work, I thought, as I recited
words I wrote in tears: instead of tears,
if I had understood my father's business,
I could be selling men's clothes. I could be
kneeling, complimenting someone at the bay
of mirrors, mumblingly, with pinpoints pressed
between my lips. That was the life I held
in scorn while young, because I thought to live
without distraction, using words. Yet, looking
now into the room of strangers' eyes, I wanted
them to feel what I said touch, as palpably
as when a man in double worsted felt
the cuff drop to his wrist. There was a rush
in the applause of gratitude and mercy:
they could go. A teenager, embarrassed
for himself and me, lefthandedly
squeezed my fingers, and said thanks.

Anonymous submission.

Brooks Haxton