

Poetry Series

Roy Clements
- poems -

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Roy Clements(19 Jan 1944)

I Wish I'D Written That

(After Billy Collins)

I understand your method – you sitting
behind a window in a quiet room (which
I imagine to be dimly lit) , with sleepy dog,

your pencil sharpened to a fine point,
poised above a clean white sheet,
expecting verses from the bending trees.

The pencil seems a thin knife with which
you peel back a moment's orange skin,
to give a reader's tongue the tang of now.

On a number of occasions past I've sat,
as now, behind a window here at home,
my wife reading in another chair,

me with your short triplet verses gently
fondling the day - until, turning the page,
I wished again I'd written as you wrote;

as when, younger, Owen's lines awoke,
within, that wracking, deadly pain of
something far from dulce et decorum;

as, elsewhere, I held a moment, hanging
in a rose garden, joining Eliot, caught
within the timelessness of time;

or sat beside a Welsh stone cottage stove,
knowing then what Thomas meant - about the
grass which raged beneath the floor.

Roy Clements