

Three Poems by Philip Wexler

The Sad Parade of Big Candles

marching in daylight, wasting their drama, they wind through the city, adding nothing to the mid-day sun. tall tapered figures struggling to show the spectators it doesn't matter whether their light illuminates or not. creamy candles out of step with each other, faltering but unable to stop or they'll be stuck to the spot from their drippings. flickering is their way of waving a hand, the derby, the flag, and the crowd, despite being unimpressed, courteously signals back with waves, winks, and thumbs up, cheering them on. but the candles' timing is all off and their dubious pride fools no one. they are ashamed – that they are sluggish, that they are melting and shrinking, unsynchronized, and are no longer the smooth vertical rods they were. They are ashamed that night is falling and it seems they won't make it. The end comes even sooner with an unexpected onset of nimbostratus clouds and showers which were not in the forecast and which the parade marshal did not expect to take precautions against. Through every quarter of the city are heard faint fizzlings of dampened wicks, are seen little puffs of smoke above stumpy wax dribbled stems, eerie in twilight's onset. And the wind comes on strong, here and there kicking over the little knobs. When it turns fully dark, the moon, out of respect, hides her face, and the street lamps won't come on.

-Philip Wexler

Andy

The little boy with the wasted leg and the battery operated robot that reached to his knee, set it down on the street in front of his house, where it moved forward and swung its metal arms up and down, and the red plastic bulb of its nose blinked on and off. overcoming its natural unsteadiness and the irregular road surface. it kept going, heading for the middle of the subdivision street where the rush hour traffic had already passed and the school bus had come and gone without the boy because his bad leg was hurting and his mother had said it was alright for him to stay home. he limped after the runaway robot and when it reached the curb across the street, it toppled over and the boy lifted it up and placed it on the neighbor's lawn. the robot had more trouble maneuvering the grass, would go a few inches, fall, and have to be righted. the going was slow, and the boy's leg throbbed from the crouching, so after the robot fell down for the twentieth time, the boy let him be, there on his side, without cutting off the power, with the arms and legs still swinging, and the red nose flashing, going nowhere. the boy stretched out on his own side facing the robot that he called Andy (named after himself) and watched its fruitless motion. From their porch, the boy's mother called "Andy, are you alright?" he shut off his robot and shouted back that he was fine, just resting. he grabbed the other Andy and stood up, but his leg buckled, and the two of them were back on the grass, his leg convulsing as he clutched the robot and groaned, "Oh, Andy." And his mother bent down, thrust the robot aside, held him tightly, and cried, "Oh, Andy."

-Philip Wexler

Modigliani is Bread

Nudes steaming fresh loaves.
Bellies pliant thighs legs all
compliant resist to part
from dough retain elastic
sponginess. Baguette arms
breadstick fingers toes
for nibbling. Brioche
breasts rise beckon for more
kneading tasting. Flat bread
back slope down to mounds
brimfully leavened. Clefs
creases indentations form
shapes re-form resistance
pressure yield spring back.
Taught stretchy bands of skin
barest hint of crust. Filmy thin
glaze of sweet cream. Awake

asleep eyes almond contoured
flavored. Inside heat swells
elongations of maximum
curves of desire. Curlicue
swirls of rising lips demand
anointing. Modigliani is bread.
Attire in nakedness
baked concoctions of women
delicious staves of life.

-Philip Wexler