

ROBERT SCHECHTER

*Thank-You Note*

"Thanks for the gift. It didn't fit.  
It had a hole and smelled like shit.  
In lousy taste and poorly made,  
a waste of every cent you paid,  
unworthy of its box and wrap,  
the ultimate in flimsy crap,  
and yet I prize it like no other  
gift I've gotten.

Love,  
Your Mother."

*from Proverbs and Songs*  
*Antonio Machado*

Not once did I pursue my fame.  
That people might recall my name,  
and song, was not my hope;  
I am in love with subtle worlds,  
weightless globes of gentle swirls,  
like bubbles made of soap.  
I like to see their painted art  
of sun and scarlet, watch them fly  
beneath the blue and trembling sky  
before they break apart.

*Blind Man*  
*after Jorge Luis Borges*

I do not know what face returns my stare  
as I lean toward the face inside the mirror,  
nor do I know the old man lurking there,  
reflected back in silent, weary anger.  
Slowly, in my darkness, with my hand,  
I trace my unseen wrinkles. Then a flash  
of light breaks through; I almost glimpse a strand  
of hair, tinged with gold yet dull as ash.  
I tell myself again that I have lost  
no more than merely superficial shows,  
the same brave consolation Milton glossed;  
but then I think of letters, or a rose.  
I think if I could only see my face,  
I'd know myself on this rare day of grace.

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Robert Schechter's poems and translations have appeared in *Light Quarterly*, *Anon*, *Evansville Review*, and *Poetry East*, among other journals.