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love poem

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'No'
the poet responds
'I will not write him a love poem.'
It was a suggestion from a friend
to make her heart known.
'The poet cannot write of love
if the poet is in love.
The perspective is lost.
The love poem suddenly becomes about the poet,
and the ordering, first person, second,
it's all wrong.
Every poem fails, in the end, to finish what it started.'
But the love poem, the poet argues, fails to even start.
She goes on. The businessman finds the best market
to buy a rose. He knows
its terrible inadequacy, but he knows nothing else.
The truth of it is, he would trade all
to be with the one he loves. The actor
knows to cut the act.
The professor grows silent.
The poet cannot help but to signify on the examples set before her :
the king hands over his crown for a dance in the court
the Goodman deals with the devil
young lovers destroy the possibilities of age
Odysseus ends his journey, native soil unrecognized.
Each of these acts requires a destruction of character.
'How can I destroy the poet
by writing a love poem?'
The poet voices her ultimate paradox, uncaps her pen. The reader reads a page smeared with
overflowing ink, the pen's contents spilled out. This poem was written for him long ago. He
wonders if anyone has been able to read it in the time between.



love poem

By Steve Minnich