

1975

## Narrowly Avoiding It

Lee Van Demarr

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## Narrowly Avoiding It / Lee Van Demarr

And long ago we were serious.  
Then we began to hate it and  
Hate led us where everything had been  
When it was nothing.  
To be serious was epic, was  
Being dead on a shield and  
Carrying it home at the same time.  
There were so many absent places,  
All of them absent where we were  
Or where we belonged.  
There were so many lost people,  
So many of them were us,  
Wearing the enemy's battered helmets,  
One with a swaggering red feather.

## Memling / Lee Van Demarr

Compassion like a violin:  
understanding what's never reached.  
Despite his eye's devotion  
arrows, bubbling oil, the widening crescent wound  
get it done. But his love  
found colors that are their calmness.  
An actual love, and so entirely uncertain  
whether his or theirs.

## Coffee / Lee Van Demarr

Coffee, brown as dirty ice,  
the color of the unfaithful  
coming excitingly back.  
I love a warm coffee bean, I love  
the cool, prowling left-over cup,  
and the first cup, a moron in black feathers.

The man put his head into the coffee,  
with both hands on the table. When he entered  
the cup his feet were dragging  
as if reluctant.  
The lights deepen over a still face.  
On the surface of coffee night is falling  
and a blind waiter leans over with stars and sugar.