

Christopher Spaide

Dunkin' Doldrums

De-, then sup-, then yup, repressed,
the deluxe prefix menu—com-, decom-, unimpressed—
we've tried the best,
ODed on *OED* for a fix of that perfect word

and fell back earthwards bearing modest
pressed: fresh- and French- and bench-pressed, the chest
ironed creaselessly crisp, the breast-
bone battered, brittle, breached by a herd,

one dozen strong, of unharnessed
Trojan horses, whose trapdoors pour a Wild West
of wiliness, no rest, no arrest
till they've plowed under and plundered

and planted romanceless ransom notes addressed,
DEAR HEART, to us: our downfall their dearest,
their dourest
our rest. Once, for damn sure, we preferred

our gloom glamorous. Gallantly processed
down Met Gala red, dressed
like a wound. Wound up the single wedding guest
chauffeured

in a stretch hearse—yes, real fakes, pro wrest-
ling stocky feelings, till worst came to worstest . . .
Who'd've guessed?
Even the clocks, hands up, surrendered.

Yesterdays, pestered for decades, acquiesced.

Pressed

for time, we've pressed

time back. Post-past, we're not post-pissed, not cured

of missing, absurdly, those same messed-

up moments that—amassed, squashed flower-flat—expressed

one squirt of self. Shame kept us tamest.

That famous shut-in, hardly heard,

shame shushes its own name—a *sham* unstressed,

some swallowed *ha*, the *me* regressed

past infancy, save the few words finessed

less in the first- or third-

than the last-person unreliable, id est,

an *I* for annihilation. We'd taste-test life's zest

the instant slimy winter caressed

our wind-nipped lips, rasped them ruddy. REST ASSURED

(cold-called the coming season) AS SURE AS SHIT, NO REST

IS SURE. Clouds clot the sky, it's a Rorschach test

on the house, and signs suggest

a splotchy psyche, free as its burd-

ens, free of the foggiest

ghost of a notion of how it'll feel to feel—dispossessed

of smug, snug numbness, or no, we're blest,

our daze is numbered—

secured with the blurred prospects off the crest

of Mt. Severest, say today we pressed

play, pressed

on, how might that feel, to live like it mattered?