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R.D. McManes is the author of seven books of poetry. He has had poems published in *Saucyvox*, *Literary Espresso*, *Prairie Poetry*, *Write On*, *Short Stuff*, *Writer's Hood*, *Haiku Sun*, *Scrivener's Pen*, *Mipo Magazine*, *Swooping Hawk Quarterly*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Poems Niedergasse*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *SP Quill Quarterly Magazine*, *Simply Haiku*, *Poetic Voices*, *Mountain Echoes*, *Poetry Sharing Journal*, *Newtopia*, *Lochraven Review*, *Banks of the Little Miami*, and *Baroque Review*.

Buffalo Grass

Green tender fingers
reach up, inquisitive
through brown buffalo grass.

Their youth rushed, consumed
by warming spring showers
and quest to touch the sun.

They grow in wild spurts
with reckless abandonment,
for what life they have
must be well spent.

The growing season
on a lone Kansas prairie
is calculated relatively brief.

Common grass-root knowledge
among the tender shoots,
passed down generation to generation.

Knowledge left over
from the roaming buffalo days,
an ancient theorem applied
by the liberal roots.

convenience buddha

went looking for one of those all night
convenience type stores ran out of smokes
which is a big time emergency though I question
the word convenience you see them sitting on
every damn corner convenient unless of course
you need something and then they vanish like
some mythical beast imagined by a nicotine
starved brain my thoughts alternate
nicotine
cigarette
like stomping steps echoing in an empty hall
naked light bulb dangles pretty habit can't be
distracted but yet I try
nicotine
cigarette
the blocks turn in to miles and miles and miles
and my habit cries brown stained tobacco tears
nicotine
cigarette
finally salvation is in sight one of them
inconvenient convenience stores I focus
to drown out the screaming
nicotine
cigarette
rush into the store and there bent
over behind the counter is buddha, sweat
running down the crack of his butt
nicotine
cigarette
in a shaking voice I ask buddha "pack of marlboro
reds please" buddha laughs and enlightens me
"sorry my son we're out but we do have kools".



R.D. McManes

Distinguished Kansas Poet

• [E-mail](#)

Cup of Tea

Sometimes I drink tea to remember
fingertips crushing the dried leaves.
I never measure the amount,
adding pinches as I feel the need.

I let the kettle whistle,
moments rising above its sound
merging in clouds of steam.

I pour the water slowly,
always stopping at half a cup.
Swirl the wetted leaves gently
careful not to breach the rim.

I like to let the leaves settle
before adding more water,
an acquired ritual I confess
though the reason escapes me.

I never take a sip,
not as long as I can see bottom.
Tea should be strong and fragrant,
something to fully savor
as if taste could be a sin.

Places, people, and even dreams,
swirling in sloshing currents
of freshly poured tea
and I remember each memory
cup to cup.

Painted World

I live in a painted world
of colors I did not choose.
Reality wields the brush,
a mad house painter
with one last job to do.
Harsh tones coat
hard stiff bristles
no hint of soft hues
bleed through. I live
in a painted world
of colors
I did not choose.

Rembrandt was never born
and never dies. Picasso
an anomaly
if he existed at all.
Monet lost his way
in dim pastel paths
Michelangelo never painted
on a single bathroom wall.
Circles reveal their corners
and horizons tilt into the sea
I live in a painted world
of colors I did not choose.

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