

Andy Roberts

Painless Dentistry is a Lie

Abscessed tooth: dentist drilling into my lower left molar
for an hour and fifteen minutes.

Root canal and a temporary filling.

Now it's over and I'm smoking a cheap cigar
on the patio at 9:00 pm,

buzzed on Vicodin and Wild Turkey.

I watch fireflies semaphore beneath the trumpet vine,
nighthawks flash over the mulberry tree.

Just south of seven hundred dollars
after insurance pays its share.

Thank god for Wild Turkey, the pain script.

True fact: nobody likes a dentist.

The notion of a high-speed drill
tearing into pulp and dentin,

nerve of an abscessed tooth
seems fundamentally wrong,

but oh so right when the pain is gone.

Hot July night on the patio
with a slowburning green cigar,

shot glass of straight Kentucky bourbon.

S.O.S. of fireflies over the climbing vines,
heavy sway of tree tops unseen overhead
as night deepens, amplifies the senses.

Attuned

Something about an acoustic bass
and a drummer playing brushes.
2:00 am with Billie Holiday
and all the emotion she communicates
to me tonight
through the miracle of recorded music.
I'd be something less without her.
Fine And Mellow on the stereo.
Sax, drums, standup bass,
her muted horn singing quietly of joy,
because we know so well its opposite.

Andy Roberts lives in Columbus, Ohio where he handles finances for disabled veterans. Recent publications include *Lake Effect*, *Meridian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Mudfish*, *Pennsylvania English*, and *Slipstream*. His latest collection of poetry, *The Green World*, was published by Night Ballet Press in March 2014. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize three times.