

DAVE MARGOSHES

This is a Poem

This is a poem that tries
too hard, that overreaches
in that peculiar way
of the very young, that stumbles
and falls and picks itself up
again, dusts itself off, gets
back on to show
the fucking muse
who's boss.

This is a poem that tells
rather than showing, that eschews
the particular for the larger picture,
binding itself up in the tentacles
of the abstract in hopes of reaching
some universal truth we can all connect
with, a poem more concerned with connections
than with the reader—who cares
about her anyway?

This is a poem aimed for the head
not the heart, a poem looking
inward rather than out, more concerned
quite frankly with itself
than with any theory of poetics,
postmodern, modern, Neanderthal. This
is a poem not of language but of words,
words that weave, that sing, words
that, in the end, simply fail me.

I read this poem to my love
but she didn't cry, didn't
get it, really, didn't show
the appropriate response. I'll read
it now to you but my hopes don't run
high, already I can see the glaze, feel
the fidget that turns you into a dancer
in your seat, and I'm beginning to wonder
if Blake didn't have it right:

a rose rather than a forest
a worm rather than the armies of night,
the thorn that pricks your finger,
drawing blood which I bring
to my lips, the tear in your eye
as I turn away. This is a poem
humble enough to admit its mistakes,
ready to open itself up to the magic, a poem
swooning for the ecstasy of revision.