



Ridwan: From Glitch Bottle

Alan Katz

Wasted

Came down to the office this morning
to find the wall dripping black sludge,
left seven hours later with one thing crossed off my list
having finished *How Will You Measure Your Life* on my headphones
while the plumber ripped open the ceiling.

Can I ever catch up? Fifteen months of sleep deprivation
and all my favorite business writers reveal
themselves as devout Christians,
you learn what's possible: can listen to audio books
at two, even three x speed and still comprehend—

though it sounds fast and distorted, it's not really,
I tell myself, about pleasure after all,
though contentment often comes with an afternoon
poblano burger and some important word written
passionately but unfortunately, illegibly. Tipped? Scales?

What was the thought? Do I need a metaphor?
Ridwan—total contentment in Arabic,

but I'm out of cash even before
I get the bill from the plumber.
We pass the fruit stand and I pay for three

lemons with my last dollar, wait in the long line
with only one check-out girl while my son licks
the unwashed peel—I ask is there tax on lemons,

wait for her answer then
cut out of the line, flashing my palm full of lemons,
slap my buck on the counter,
get to the coffee shop as they are picking up the chairs
for the night, offer to pay for my coffee
plus a refill on my Mastercard.

Someday I will feel calm and less narcoleptic.
And then who will hold my hand
while I walk the dog in the moonlight.

Alan Katz's poetry has appeared in such publications as *Diverse Voices Quarterly*,
Sanskrit, *Burningwood* and *Hiram Poetry Review*.