

On Meeting Palmer

The Fates were decidedly
behind schedule that night.
How else to explain that
our pre-ordained meeting took place
in the midst of a rainy Asheville street,
and not the fire-lit lobby of
a mountain retreat or the
worn velvet seats of a
symphonic concert?
Of course,
your moments
are limited.
Esophageal cancer.
Six months.
Perhaps a year.
No reason,
or time,
for the Fates
to finely plan these encounters.
You spoke of the vagaries
of feeding tubes
and lovers past.
We planned our long-awaited,
excursion to Laos.
Deceptions accepted,
we sealed our itinerary with a kiss -
all disbelief banished.
For that one evening we wove
our fantastical blanket
of fiction, and softly
covered ourselves with lies.
Warding off the rain
and death.

Street Festival

Downtown Asheville, after five.
The rain has brought forth
buds of eccentricities
in the middle of the Broadway pavement.
A rainbow of rain boots
encase women's legs –
garden chic couture.
The Ballet Cowboy

gallantly doffs his jacket and
offers it
to a parking meter,
protecting it from
the drizzle.
A drug-dazed,
and thirsty,
baggy-pants boy
in search of beer.
Finding instead
the protective custody of
the City's finest.
Garbage guardians
righteously overseeing
the disposal of
paper napkins
and plastic forks.
A conspiratorial, and
not-so-clandestine,
meeting of the
polka-dot umbrella cabal.
What devious plots
were being devised
'neath those spotted hemispheres?
Ballet Cowboy returns.
Jacket retrieved
from the parking meter,
he poorly performs a
half-hearted rendition
of some country line dance.
Hat held out,
mumbling an
incoherent incantation.
Supplicating the rain gods?
Searching for the comfort of a
rain-booted woman?
Searching for the music
that matches the
rhythm in his head?
In all cases,
his prayers
go unanswered.