

# The Poem Arrests His Attention

by Richard Hague

He's sitting on his porch doing nothing.  
all day doing nothing, just hanging, chilling,  
chilling so long he's breathless,

stiff. Just about done in,  
doing nothing.  
So the poem swerves around the

corner, lights flashing, hits  
the curb, jumps  
out before the cruiser's finally stopped,

storms up the steps, shouts,  
"What you doing, boy!"  
And the boy says, "Nothing."

"Exactly!" the poem shouts, and  
writes him up a ticket, five hundred dollars,  
"Idling and loafing

away a life, wasting a gift  
that requires of us action and fine words  
plus thanksgiving."

His sentence? "Look at a hundred  
insects in the museum,  
imagine their indigo and emerald and

iridescent lives.  
Taste moo shu pork  
with someone you've just met

and over dinner memorize  
her life story. Kiss someone you've hoped to  
love, despite your weakness and fear.

Love your teacher, though he is  
balding and red-faced and angry  
some of the time, for he

has treasure and wealth to  
splurge on you  
in the name of Beauty.