

# Why He Needs Beauty

by Richard Hague

If he doesn't get it,  
he will die. Just as surely as a starved child  
wastes away, he will

fade away into squalor and ugliness,  
the daily assault of advertising and prejudice,  
the interior poisoning of good will,

the rotting away of happiness and worth,  
the month always longer than the check,  
the pantry empty,  
the roaches of poverty scrabbling his pillow.

Beauty costs nothing,  
comes with every dawn, every moment of keen  
perception in the subway, like Pound's

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd—  
petals on a wet, black bough*

every noticing, like Basho's, of how

*the distant mountains  
are reflected in the eye  
of the dragonfly*

Beauty is toughness,  
goodness, the way out of anger  
and the smothered mine  
of self.

He needs beauty like he needs air,  
needs food, love, the touch  
of the world firing his nerves,

the pull of gravity making  
him strong even as he  
staggers uphill  
against it.