

# Pencil In the All-Night Diner

by Llewellyn McKernan

I jut from red nails,  
big hair. Hold chewed gum when jaws  
want to be relieved  
for a spell. I lionize the toothpicks,  
the splinter that won't  
kow-tow to the baseboards.

I'm the true poet.  
Those "art for art's sake" pencils  
just wave sweet recipes  
in the starving customer's  
face. But I come up

with the real thing (tuna  
melt, BLT, gravy biscuit). Hour  
after hour, I hold my head  
high above my moving shorthand  
and diners dig into  
exactly what they ordered,  
its sunrise savor.

The lonely alone  
I save night after night with my  
blue plate special.