

WILLIAM BROWN

ODE TO THE TACO BELL DRIVE- THROUGH WORKER

For someone other than Matthew Porto, who, when asked if this poem could be dedicated to him, said, "No."

I never thought I'd meet a siren--
not out at sea on a salty, creaky ship,
or even at the town watering hole--
but by god, Poseidon or otherwise,
the voice coming out of the speaker
made me want the whole menu.
I don't know what she swallowed
as a child, some golden maraca
while I chewed pennies and pine needles,
but its rattle uplifted like a snake's.
I was finally ready, eager even,
to fill out a customer satisfaction survey,
except I wasn't given one. And the voice broke
her promise to see me at the window--
the promise that made me comb my hair,
check for deodorant, and question
if it was appropriate to leave a tip,
or my number, with a drive-through worker.
No, the lady who gave me my quesadilla

was a rusty blender in an anechoic chamber.
Some non-gilled Ursula surely plotting
to rip the voice from its speaker with eel fingers.
And just like Odysseus, I was too weak
to break from my seat belt, my car driving
away from taco island, back to the highway.

William Brown has a master's in poetry from Texas Tech University, and his poems have appeared in journals such as *Copper Nickel*, *Crab Creek Review*, *McNeese Review*, and elsewhere.

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