

Poems by Les Murray

The Tune on Your Mind

Asperges me hyssopo
the snatch of plainsong went,
Thou sprinklest me with hyssop
was the clerical intent,
not *Asparagus with hiccups*
and never *autistic savant*.

Asperger, mais. Asperg is me.
The coin took years to drop:

Lectures instead of chat. The want
of people skills. The need for Rules.
Never towing a line from the Ship of Fools.
The avoided eyes. Great memory.
Horror not seeming to perturb –
Hyssop can be a bitter herb.

Photographing Aspiration

Fume-glossed, unhearably shrill,
this car is dilated with a glaze
that will vanish before standstill –

and here's the youth swimming in space
above his whiplash motorcycle:
quadriplegia shows him its propped face –

after, he begged video scenes
not display his soaking jeans,
urine that leathers would have hidden
and the drag cars have engines on their engines.

Les Murray is Australia's leading poet. His most recent collections are "Poems the Size of Photographs" (2002) and "Collected Poems 1961 – 2002" (2002). He has published some thirty books, including the verse novel "Fredy Neptune" (1999).

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