

New Poetry by John Morris



John is happy that two of his new poems will appear in the Spring 2011 issue of Poetry East, published at DePaul University in Chicago. He's been trying to get in that journal for quite a while! Poetry East was ranked by London's Poetry Review as one of the top 20 literary journals in the United States. You can read the poems [here](#).

J. Morris

FANTASY ON A THEME BY HALLMARK

*Some are hallowed and familiar:
Birthday, Happy anniversary,
and Sympathy, the one we all will need.
But recently the colored cardboard placards
placed to segregate the neighborhoods,
each ethnic group of greeting cards
descending in rows from its descriptor –
recently these signposts have taken
to marking curious new developments
of sensibility. The cards themselves
suck, of course, and so
I offered a stoned clerk twenty dollars
and now I send the cardboard signs instead.
Cope is useful; a stern imperative.
And Suitable for remarriage has
a tart ambiguity: her or me?
Money holder, mailed without comment,
speaks its reproof to mean acquaintances.
Best of all, the series I have lived
so many times and never known how*

*to subdivide and signify. Now I send More
than friends, then New love
(humor) (God, I guess, is laughing),
then Troubled love, then Sorry.
A final, noble, sweet effort,
Across the miles, and then the truth:
Blank inside.*

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J. Morris

ONLY PASSING THROUGH

*Books were tough bones, once,
they kept you upright, gave you something
strong beneath your easily insulted flesh.
You finished a good book
and it was yours, part of the skeleton, the
articulation
of self – you could feel it when you pressed
hard.*

*And a lifetime of years and words go by and
now books refresh you, they cleanse and cool –
they're like sprinklers you ran through
as a child on a summer morning, reflecting
whatever light is already there. The brief ahah!
Nothing
you'd ever keep, or want to.
You forget them as soon as they're read.*

Who can remember every sun-shower?

"Yes," you say of a recent book,

"I think I read that, last year. I recall

liking it. It was good,

wasn't it?" And it's becoming true

of music too, and places,

and thoughts. The gleaming lawn,

the mirrored light, and you, only passing through.