

Two Poems · *Stuart Friebert*

VISITING ROBERT FRANCIS WITH MY SON

for S. & R.F.

We ask about the crayon poems on the desk.
There's quite a heap of them, you can't take
your eyes away. Oh, he says, I try to write
one every day now. I surely like Crayolas,
doesn't everyone? He reaches over but knocks
the orange on the floor. Don't bother, please,
I'd like to fetch it, he seems to say and takes
many moments to lower his arthritic shape down
notch by notch to his knee by hanging on tight
with both hands to the desk. We look away while
he takes many more moments getting back up—
There it is, he says, Now I can do another one
in orange. We wave off an offer to make tea.

It's been the usual sweet sweet time everyone
reports having in his company, from the walk
about the yard to the request for a photo with
him standing between those two headlights he's
rescued from an abandoned car and stationed on
the grass before the door. We're worried we're
tiring him but he says, Any last questions before
you go? Well, my son wonders, taking in all of
the woodenness to the place, worrying about fire
of course, Do you keep all your poems here, sir?
No, my boy, Francis winks, They're all in a nice
safety deposit box in the town bank, thank you.