

Narrowly Avoiding It / Lee Van Demarr

And long ago we were serious.
Then we began to hate it and
Hate led us where everything had been
When it was nothing.
To be serious was epic, was
Being dead on a shield and
Carrying it home at the same time.
There were so many absent places,
All of them absent where we were
Or where we belonged.
There were so many lost people,
So many of them were us,
Wearing the enemy's battered helmets,
One with a swaggering red feather.

Memling / Lee Van Demarr

Compassion like a violin:
understanding what's never reached.
Despite his eye's devotion
arrows, bubbling oil, the widening crescent wound
get it done. But his love
found colors that are their calmness.
An actual love, and so entirely uncertain
whether his or theirs.

Coffee / Lee Van Demarr

Coffee, brown as dirty ice,
the color of the unfaithful
coming excitingly back.
I love a warm coffee bean, I love
the cool, prowling left-over cup,
and the first cup, a moron in black feathers.

The man put his head into the coffee,
with both hands on the table. When he entered
the cup his feet were dragging
as if reluctant.
The lights deepen over a still face.
On the surface of coffee night is falling
and a blind waiter leans over with stars and sugar.