

## TWO POEMS BY JOHN C. McDERMID

### Laudable Pus

They are agreed not to merely  
love but fall repeatedly in love  
skinning knees and elbows;  
fall as from moving cars in love.

And in that scuffed state to set  
the skewed bones in plaster smoothed  
with a caress; clean reopenable  
cuts and call this everything and love.

Spirit away by soothing lips  
the ache of minor bruises; so to  
touch and heal and so add much  
to what is everything and love.

Agreed to shout down much sleeping  
snow, shake the avalanche awake that  
sweeps them to earth; to lie there  
tenderly wounded, fallen again in love.

## Balustrade Oenological

Cellardepth  
Lord Somnolent Balustrade  
slumps among his grape  
wholly lacking corkscrew.

To the dank steps upward  
which stare him down  
Balustrade accusing  
addresses himself;

“You could be stone  
but you are plywood”  
ignoring the linoleum  
which echoes.

“We will sell no wine”  
quotes he  
“before its time”  
and cites the source,

Noting with agony the  
history of glassy explosions  
the premature ejaculations  
of fine pale champagnes.

He seizes a dusty one  
grinning needing no tools  
but a fist holding the cork  
to a smoking erotic whisper,

Whispering his own lament for  
half Dom Perignon's yearly treasure  
bursting pooling in the broken glass  
of bottles unequal to the wine.

Balustrade slumped now  
explosively among his grape  
in dangerous ferment; a fear of  
bursting and a pale draining away.