

Success

So fragile
so febrile
so fearful
have I been made
that the tiniest possible success
derails my volatile biochemistry
the potential publication
of a few small poems
agitating my blood, my brain, my neural pathways
and bringing the dreaded sleeplessness
that could so quickly arc into mania

I have my safety net
if sleep won't return
in the early hours
after the habitual wakeup call
of my insistent old-age bladder

the soupçon of bee pollen and honey
that will usually soothe me back to sleep
or my beloved meditation
and the sleep thereafter
or most infrequently
if I must
a quarter cut
of the smallest Ambien tablet
which will bring me down
and dull my day
so sensitive
I have been made
to life
and the allopathic hatchets
of the heavy-handed Frankensteins
of pharmaceutical commerce

Such a delicate balance
a fine line
a razor's edge
I am forced to tread

Is it magnificent
or pitiful

or somewhere in between
that a mere prospect
of the least success
is so forbidden
so dangerous
so exhilaratingly terrifying
that it could obliterate
my vulnerable stability
my equilibrium
my very sanity?

But it's more than a few published poems
is it not?
After all,
I might open up
and the whole world could come in

And it's more than my dead father
living within me
ready to slay me
at the least provocation

It's the visceral torment
of being crucified
drawn and quartered
flayed alive
burnt at the stake
branded in the living memory
of my quivering, everlasting soul
I'd rather not repeat
in the flesh
yet again

Or is it?