

## Mona Lisa with Garden Hose

The afternoon was hot and muggy  
but the evening turned cool.  
A man was riding his bicycle  
down this quiet street  
of neat brick bungalows, bright pocket gardens,  
and freshly trimmed mimosa trees.

He rides by a woman in shorts  
out front, watering her lawn.  
First he sees legs and  
just for a moment, when their eyes meet  
he can't get over her improvisation:  
a perfectly unrehearsed smile.

Is it just his imagination, he wonders,  
or is there a hint of mischief  
behind that smile?  
No sooner does he think this  
than she gives in to the imp—  
aims the nozzle right at him.

He's out of reach now, but smiles appreciatively  
(thinking he's already missed the beat)  
turns and says, "I could use it!"  
And she replies, "Yeah, I'll bet."

Already he's down the street  
feeling the balmy air slipping through his fingers  
touched by a near-religious light  
rippling over backyard hedges,  
stretching shadows of grape arbors  
ever closer to mystery,  
transforming gravel alleys  
into grassy lanes of wonder,  
where cats are perfectly at home.

And then, he is home,  
having an argument with himself:  
*What else was there to say?*  
For longer than he'd care to admit (days in fact),  
he tries to hold her smile in memory . . . .

That smile—what a surprise!  
And all the mischief  
such a smile implies. . .