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## Expect Any Answer, and: Not This Boston

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## EXPECT ANY ANSWER

Frank O'Hara was a ram

born hot but he died  
believing he was a Cancer, a crab clacking  
in his own strong water. If he knew

his life began in March instead of June,  
would he have been so devastated by any death?

Would he have given up sex with strangers in 1957?

Would he still have fallen to his knees  
at the feet of Giulietta Masina, Fellini's *Lo Spippolo*,  
another small thing pushing O'Hara

toward tenderness? Does he still suffer  
from the stale enervation of waking to bourbon  
and orange juice? Would an Aries nurse

James Schuyler through episodes of schizophrenia, hiding  
him in the Hamptons, wiping his million terrors—  
the encroaching fog, babies, sulphur

and tulips—from public view? Or send a telegram  
to Boris Pasternack applauding his Nobel win?

Perhaps this is like asking

if Russia hadn't refused Pasternak the Nobel Prize,  
would he still have died two years later,  
his lungs clouded with lesions?

or if Putin hadn't jailed Pussy Riot  
would we still need John Kerry to slap his wrist  
with a ruler every third day?



TANA JEAN WELCH

## NOT THIS BOSTON

Bored of my intentional  
community and all  
the artists pretending  
to keep bees

I went back  
longing to see  
the same city, walked  
every sidewalk

and waited to feel  
summer of '06 happy,  
but Hamersly's was gone,  
the South End town houses  
all belonged to the new breed  
of women teaching their babies  
Spanish while in Supta Konasana.

The Mother Church  
and her reflecting pool  
no longer reflected  
an endless stream of exceptional  
stars. Everything a dull  
sickly tympanic membrane,

so to the North  
End! I watched an armory  
combing its bronze bricks,  
a busker braiding fire—  
but even that was cold.

Not the same  
city nine years later, this Boston  
of my lonely commercial ache,

this Boston of the self who forgot  
the difference a body makes—  
your body making mine  
a singular presence.

The phrase “watched an armory combing its bronze bricks” is from Frank O’Hara’s “Poem,” from *Lunch Poems*, which begins with the phrase as its first line.