

The Loneliest Age
Richard LeDue

We didn't starve,
but we were malnourished;
learned to read
from the back of cereal boxes
(part of a complete breakfast).

Our favourite TV shows
taught us
the joy of tearing plastic,
cardboard apart;
bedroom floor littered
with action figures like a battlefield
where everyone lost.

Adolescence was no better.
Toy soldiers buried
in shoeboxes, no monument,
just acne and the realization
that childhood had too many bowls
filled with sugar.

Legally an adult at eighteen,
yet unkissed,
lips over-licked,
especially in winter,
builds to a fantasy that sex
would mean someone
else to pour the milk.

Not elderly yet,
but envision a beautiful nurse,
sponge baths daily,
along with diaper changes.
She'll spoon feed us hot cereal,
grown cold.

Richard LeDue was born in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. He currently lives and teaches in Norway House, Manitoba. His work has been published by the *Tower Poetry Society*, in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, the *Eunoia Review*, *Mojave He[art] Review*, *Little Rose Magazine*, and *Black Bough Poetry*.