

Gary Hyland / TWO POEMS

CASE HISTORY 3

The man who thinks his wife's a hat
has an extreme paranoid syndrome
marked by the most bizarre delusions.
Weeks earlier, convinced she was
a dish of butter, he bruised her
trying to spread her on a muffin
(which of course was not a muffin
but the *Sunday New York Times*).
And while she was a Dodge he nearly
drove her crazy changing her oil.
When she was a hat he merely wanted
to brush her off and hang her in a closet.

Meanwhile next door Roger just-wed
thinks his Lynn's an angel on a bun.
And Lori in the condo opposite
wakes beside a dashing knight of neon
even while his white horse, tethered
out front, shits upon her lawn.

SELF-DEFENCE

On the white flesh just below his jaw
the blood blossomed warm, a rose
with roots around his heart.

Each breath, a frothing in his mouth.
At last he could not speak.
And that was all she wanted.

He had known, but could not stop
the words like wings in his lungs,
exciting his tongue.

They flew against her battlements
and died in feathered heaps,
too deep, too thick to sweep away.

The nights of soft concussions
were a torment she could not bear,
and so the knife.

He would live, the scar a second smile
beneath his smile. And she would live,
no less wounded, beneath her smile.