

Jeff Hardin

Based on a True Story

Year after year the same complexities
plagued him. Riddles were everywhere,
even in his answers, which he almost
believed. He was not immortal,
as he'd earlier wished to be.
His attention waned. Birds built nests
in the gutters, chirped with abandon
and frivolity. Days simply occurred.
The dialogue he had he could never be sure
meant as much to the other as it did to him.
That to which he pledged allegiance
was often erased by the powers that be.
Each morning the newspaper came,
though God had never blessed it,
though it spoke of the failures
a town tries to hide. Every day
was like an elegy, much too long
and with pointless mourning.
Some of his prayers he knew
were contrived, though even those
were ennobling and fierce.
His wife, in the fall, planted mums
near the road, an apology to summer
for the snows on the way. Cars honked.
A squirrel in a tree barked complaint
at a cat. Something like drama
descended on all. Serendipity he loved
most of all, told no one, and wept.
In the end, there were so many fictions.