

Pity the Beautiful

By Dana Gioia

Pity the beautiful,
the dolls, and the dishes,
the babes with big daddies
granting their wishes.

Pity the pretty boys,
the hunks, and Apollos,
the golden lads whom
success always follows.

The hotties, the knock-outs,
the tens out of ten,
the drop-dead gorgeous,
the great leading men.

Pity the faded,
the bloated, the blowsy,
the paunchy Adonis
whose luck's gone lousy.

Pity the gods,
no longer divine.
Pity the night
the stars lose their shine.

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It seems almost a requirement for a poet to have an unconventional résumé, but Dana Gioia's is perhaps notable for being so conventionally unpoetic. A graduate of Stanford Business School, Gioia claims to be "the only person, in history, who went to business school to be a poet." He later rose to become a vice president at General Foods. He served as chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts from 2003 to 2008 and is the Judge Widney Professor of Poetry and Public

Culture at the University of Southern California. In 2015, Gioia was named Poet Laureate of California. Although Gioia writes in free verse, he is known primarily for his formal work, and has been included in the school of New Formalism, a movement in the 1990s by American poets to bring traditional verse forms back to the fore.

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