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## American Nightmare

Henry Crawford

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# AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

Henry Crawford

[I couldn't read] [this morning] [not this] [not that] [nothing] [pretended to read] [the newspaper] [words all around me] [I don't recognize] [I remember] [they had a word] [for this] [condition] [what does that word] [look like] [someone] [may try] [to test me] [hold up a card saying] [ILLITERATE] [they may ask] [what is this word] [how will I know] [what to say] [they have names] [for everything] [even the sun] [what if the card says] [SUN] [how will I know] [its not the moon] [if it is the moon] [I'll say] [I knew all along] [of course] [I know] [what the moon] [looks like] [or was it the sun] [what if the bus driver] [has a card] [and wants to know] [where I'm going] [it could be] [a trick] [what] [STREET] [do you want] [the bus people] [will start laughing] [I'll have to guess] [play along] [what if the policeman] [has a card] [is this your] [NAME] [sir] [of course I know] [who I am] [but what is this word] [they have] [for me] [the judge] [has a card] [it states my] [GUILT] [but what is this word] [if I say I'm not guilty] [and it says I am guilty] [then I would be guilty] [of lying] [until I woke up] [happy to be myself] [again] [I can read] [I know all my words] [wife downstairs] [at the breakfast table] [sunlight streaming] [down the staircase] [still] [in her nightgown] [staring at me] [holding up] [a card]

HENRY CRAWFORD's work has appeared in several journals and online publications including *Boulevard* (finalist 2014 emerging poets contest), *Copper Nickel*, and *Poets Reading the News*. His first collection of poetry, *American Software*, was published in 2017 by CW Books. His second collection of poetry, *The Binary Planet*, was published by The Word Works in 2020. His poem *The Fruits of Famine*, won first prize in the 2019 World Food Poetry Competition. His poem *Blackout* was selected by the *Southern Humanities Review* as a finalist in the 2018 Jake Adam York Witness Poetry Contest. His poem *Making an Auto Insurance Claim* was selected as an honorable mention in *Winning Writer's* 2019 Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest. His multi-media work, *Gettysburg Auto Tour*, was selected as a finalist for the Deanna Tulley Multimedia Prize. His website is [HenryCrawfordPoetry.com](http://HenryCrawfordPoetry.com)