

# Poetry

by [Jeanne Murray Walker](#) in the [December 26, 2006](#) issue

*There is no happiness like mine.  
I have been eating poetry.*

*—Mark Strand*

What shall I do with this book I love  
so much I'd like to eat it? Meeting  
the poet at a reading, I would cast  
my eyes down. I'd walk behind him,  
not stepping on his shadow. If he told me  
I was half blind, I might lose sight  
in both my eyes. At home, everything  
I write becomes infected with his  
wildness: for instance, this, which  
I never planned, which has no ending.

Where shall I put the book, so full of life  
my car could barely stick to the Expressway?  
When my cold encyclopedias sense  
its goofy brilliance, they climb and hang  
on one another like Chinese gymnasts.  
I must subtract to make a place  
for the book to live. I lift out histories,  
then other listless volumes. I toss my boring  
files, erase the answering machine,  
renounce the desk, computer, pens.

Only the illumination of St. John stays.  
In my study's scooped-out heart  
I wait beside the book, which glows  
with light borrowed from some distant star.  
I look at St. John's face. He gazes from

his throne, his eyes blazing with love  
and understanding. Tongues of flame  
play over him, sent from the Source  
who is both arsonist and fireman,  
and in his right hand, he holds a book.