

Bodega Bay

Thin, unbroken strands of ghostly gray
trail from the end of an anxious cigarette, finger
the back of a schoolyard bench.
The frail, skeletal appendages
are slowly broken by the calm
approach of a black death.
Soft, blue-jacketed maiden,
hair of straw and eyes of jade—
foul air suddenly turns her
day into fluttering black darkness.
The young flee their nests,
panicked, as black beaks streak
from abandoned schoolyard, through streets
matted with turbid hysteria.
Prayers are preyed upon,
the maiden's eyes now jaded,
her straw like hair strewn,
as if fine gold feathers
scourged by a cold, black coastal storm.

—*Michael Pracht*