

Friedman, Michael

SPECIES

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Astonishingly, Mr. Friedman is the author of four other published collections of poetry. Born and raised in New York, he received his education at Columbia, Yale, and Duke. His work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The American Poetry Review* and *New American Writing*. He now lives in Denver where he is an adjunct member of the faculty of the MFA writing program at the Naropa Institute in Boulder. There is a difference between these short prose poems and the sophomoric piffle cranked out by tortured adolescents throughout the industrialized world. For one thing, Mr. Friedman is thirty-eight years old. For another, the work of his classmates, after having been used to impress hapless friends and family with their unrecognized genius, was allowed quietly to slip into the trash while moving from dorm room to first apartment. Friedman chose instead not only to hang onto his ravings, but to broadcast them. But what was excruciatingly clever the night before is considerably less so once the smoke has cleared. The formula seems to be: take two or three clichéd expressions, tie them loosely together with non sequiturs into a stupifyingly disjointed narrative, and hope the reader will equate inscrutability with profundity. Some of us do not. In a piece entitled *Bronze*, the author states, "In the Bronze Age bronze was on everyone's mind. The office park is just where I left it. What was forged in the smithy of whose soul? Not much. Meanwhile, in ancient Rome, it's one long siesta after another. Seventh inning itch."

This is the sort of stuff one might expect from a trust fund hippie who, unable to find gainful employment, writes poetry for an MFA program.