

Tim Suermondt

The Highest Grade

A man shouts from across the street
“You’re my hero!”
and for a moment I think his words

are directed at me.
Well, why not? I must have done
some small heroic things in my life

and, surely, all my loved ones
believe me capable of great heroics.
When I realize I am not the person

intended, I put my hands
in my light spring jacket,
take a few steps and see a man helping

an elderly woman cross the crowded street.
Different woman, different street
but I did just that last week,

that tiny decency. We linked arms
and made it safely to the entrance
of her grand, blue building.

Together

It's starting to rain hard
and the homeless man
who's living in the neighborhood
offers me his umbrella
shredded quite profusely.
I take it and give it back
to him as mine. We'd
make a great comedy pair,
he says, and for a moment
we are pals, forgetting
the rain, how silly we look
getting soaked under it together.