

Ms. Schadenfreude Takes a Good Look Around

and sees some rich people finally
getting the kind of come-uppance
she thinks they so richly deserve.

It's not revenge, not retribution.
Nothing she has anything
to do with—beyond the fact
that she observes what is unfolding
with a measure of glee she has
learned how to keep to herself.

It is only, she thinks, justice—
a leveling of the playing field,
shifting the world
into a balance she can stand.

Misfortune takes the best of them—
or those who saw themselves
as better—down a notch or two,
closer to that rung on the ladder
she's been struggling her whole life
to climb—always striving,
always one step shy of even.

Ms. Schadenfreude: Half Empty/ Half Full

Some days she thinks how little it would take
to make her feel happy—or, at least, content.
Other days she is convinced that nothing
ever really can. Or will.

Down the block a passel of girls play
in a cliché of happy childhood—
a lemonade stand and excitement
over the couple of quarters Ms. S drops
into their jar, paying twice the price
they asked to taste their wares.

Inflation, heat indexes—these details
mean nothing to those kids—all decked out
in pinks and purples and immersed
in their last few weeks of summer freedom.

And Ms. Schadenfreude is willing
to revel with them, to play along;
perfectly willing to hand over her spare change
and assure them *it's delicious!*
Though she can barely swallow a sip
of their overly-sugared concoction, which she dumps
down the drain the minute she's out of their sight.