

JACE RAYMOND SMELLIE

Slowly, Madly, Truthfully

Recuse myself from this never-ending parade
of tea and pocket-watches and mustard and glue
dripping from a brim and eyes and I can't help

reducing it all to shillings and Mike Pence
said something about a ceasefire success
and my daughter asks if he's a fireman

and I say *arson* and she says *what* and I'm a thief
I mean I've been thieved of my rich vigor
that crossed the tee box for another practice

swing on the third hole and in fourth grade
I lined a paper until it dripped with patriotic retaliation
for my favorite towers featured on a postcard my mother sent

home from Rosie O'Donnell's live special aired
from the shadows of an empirical state of mind
brewing in another tower waiting to trump us all

and I don't think I'll ever be able to explain
to any child how this poem came to be.