

## IN THE PARK

Eyes blink as faint light invades the dark.  
Stretching, unhunched, I wake to face the hours  
Ahead, unready to face another day.  
Another day like any other day  
In the park.

Knowing that I look far older than I am  
And feeling far far older than I look,  
I rise to wash away the night, and drink  
From the solitary water fountain  
In the park.

Too soon they will arrive to stake their claims.  
Always first, the arrow-straightened matron,  
Child-guardian who, with life-piercing eyes,  
Will hunch me back down for simply being  
In the park.

Mid-day will bring the promise of a meal,  
Picnic scraps discarded for salvation.  
Hunching down, patiently I watch and wait  
For my moment to gather in my meal  
In the park.

Then children, congregating by the hoard,  
Over-armed with spiteful slings and arrows,  
Knowing how to hunch me down too well, but  
Not knowing what they do, nor knowing why.  
In the park.

Gathered by the twilight, star-eyed lovers  
Clipped by Cupid's arrow, gaze and linger  
While I straighten, just a little, grateful  
For this glimpse of love amongst my ruins –  
In the park.

And when the unforgiving darkness falls  
I creep to seek the solace of my cell.  
Dry, alone, and almost warm, I hunch back  
Down to find my place, beneath the bandstand  
In the park.

*Brian D'Arcy Sheffield*