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**Drink this**

by Darrell Petska

we tell our children  
and of course they do  
we did and do  
it tastes pretty good  
or so we've come to think  
for everyone's drinking it

becoming managers  
engineers teachers lawyers  
and whatnot saying to one and all  
drink this  
it tastes pretty good

oh a few find it bitter  
pushing the cup aside and going very wrong—  
object lessons to the rest of us  
lest we shed our civil skins and turn  
grotesque or perverse or at the very least  
incomprehensible  
evolving into life forms alien to our measured  
reasoned existence

*quickly now  
quell the monsters within  
like mummy and daddy  
you'll go far  
pretty far  
if you don't think too hard  
just drink*

Darrell Petska's writing has appeared in The Missing Slate, HEArt Online, The New Verse News, The Stare's Nest, Boston Literary Magazine and a variety of other electronic and print publications. His day jobs have included psychiatric casework, nursing home evaluation, and most recently, engineering communications at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.