

'Will Work For Food' by David Copson

Below the edge of the bridge he sleeps, or hovers
on two dirty mattresses, cleaner than his stubble;
his arm a pillow starved of blood, feet shod with
immovable shoes, a soiled raincoat a second skin.

He is part of the landscape, like the bridge,
disregarded like the concrete struts that hold
the traffic to the sky. There is graffiti on the bridge,
spray-painted by a skilful hand, but my eyes,

and perhaps my heart, are drawn to the words
he has written on cardboard in a desperate plea,
'Will Work For Food'. And it looks like his spirit
is starved, though there is flesh on his bones.

And I have no idea how you lie all day in this place,
hoping that someone needs to feed you, to return
you to humanity, to give you ground-zero dignity.
Have there been prayers for this man, or at least

atheistic good wishes? Oh if love could feed him,
hope guide his feet and hands, so he would rise
from this degrading squalor to work again, to eat,
to smile upon the world; to smile at us.