

Poetry

by [Jeanne Murray Walker](#) in the [December 26, 2006](#) issue

*There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.*

-Mark Strand

What shall I do with this book I love
so much I'd like to eat it? Meeting
the poet at a reading, I would cast
my eyes down. I'd walk behind him,
not stepping on his shadow. If he told me
I was half blind, I might lose sight
in both my eyes. At home, everything
I write becomes infected with his
wildness: for instance, this, which
I never planned, which has no ending.

Where shall I put the book, so full of life
my car could barely stick to the Expressway?
When my cold encyclopedias sense
its goofy brilliance, they climb and hang
on one another like Chinese gymnasts.
I must subtract to make a place
for the book to live. I lift out histories,
then other listless volumes. I toss my boring
files, erase the answering machine,
renounce the desk, computer, pens.

Only the illumination of St. John stays.
In my study's scooped-out heart
I wait beside the book, which glows
with light borrowed from some distant star.
I look at St. John's face. He gazes from

his throne, his eyes blazing with love
and understanding. Tongues of flame
play over him, sent from the Source
who is both arsonist and fireman,
and in his right hand, he holds a book.