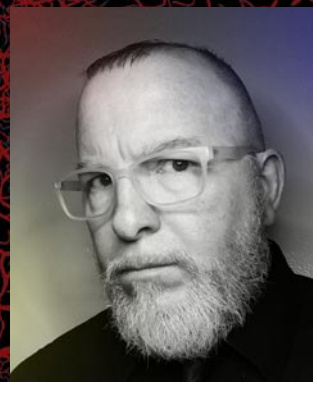
Feeling for a Vein

The ice cream man smiles at me tenderly
as he hands me my bomb pop,
which doesn't go off, as advertised,
but instead melts fast as I lick
against the speed of the Sun July
gave us, that decadent Icarus lick.
The gray man looks at me
for a second longer than is normal
and then bursts into loud tears
as he hands me my change.
I feel for him and want to help,
so I keep my mouth shut
and leave immediately.

The officer is barely contained
within his uniform. I'm told to turn
the engine off. We're in the outskirts
of town and with the window down
I can hear the car's engine hissing
and ticking, and as well I can hear
crickets from the other side of the road.
The moonlight makes faraway bell sounds
as it hits the leaves of the trees
in the nearby park. Is that right?
Is it supposed to make a sound at all?
The officer returns in high dudgeon
with my license and an order to get
my right taillight fixed and soon.
I tell him thank you and he bursts
into tears, bawling his eyes out
as I start the car and drive off.

It's been a hell of a day, I feel,
though it has always been a hell of a day.
The nurse comes in to check on me.
You're lucky to be alive, you know,
she says. I can barely open my eyes,
let alone answer. She can tell that
I want to respond, can tell that I'm
confused and afraid, can tell that I don't
even know what time it is or why
I'm even in the hospital in the first place
and at the sight of all this on my face
she starts laughing uncontrollably,
feeling for a vein.

Rich Boucher



Rich Boucher resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Rich has been a member of poetry slam teams representing cities all across the U.S., including twice representing Albuquerque. Rich's poems have appeared in The Nervous Breakdown, Menacing Hedge, Neon, Bending Genres and Stink Eye, among others, and most recently has had work published in Unknotting the Line: The Poetry in Prose from Dos Gatos Press. Rich is BOMBFIRE Magazine's Associate Editor, and he is the author of All Of This Candy Belongs To Me. Visit richboucher.bandcamp.com for more. He loves his life with his love Leann and their sweet cat Callie.