

A Failure of Conflict Resolution Among the Lilliputians

After they've taken turns garroting the mediator,
She fires the first shot, a low blow, knowing he'll go nuclear.
Asserting that he's never taken her to DEFCON 1. Not once.
That she's been faking it all the while, her mind during sex
On that next great sweater she was going to knit. Not for him,

For UNICEF. Her high-pitched OH, GOD, OH GODs an artifice
High school girls practiced after hygiene class, to fool their boyfriends.
The latest Vamp nail polish, splashed on the cover models
Of *Elle*, *Vogue* and *Cosmo*, is what she's thinking of, and of being covered
Not by him, by God, but by some fabulous Fabio from head to toe.

After the wreck of court-ordered mediation, they drift for a time
Together but apart on a shared bed, a sea of Egyptian cotton softness
Whose thread counts would make a math whizz faint from dizziness, rowing
Independently like lifeboats of a sinking ship. A pair of concupiscent porcupines
Curled up and daring each other to make that first move. Just now it's her turn

To needle him, his beer belly peeking out from under the duvet
Her pin cushion of choice. Reminding him of when he threw a condom at her,
Spilling his essence on the bed sheets, resulting in more stick-to-itiveness
Than he had shown her in years. Cum and curses flying everywhere.
The Chernobylish glow of the hall light leaking into the bedroom.

And this is how a marriage ends, with high school sweethearts
Arm-wrestling across the breakfast nook for control of the checkbook.
Next door, the children, still zipped into hazmat p.j.'s for the night,
Bunker their heads under survivalist pillows. And wish, not for the first time
Nor for the last, that both their parents had gone down with the ship.