

Michael Derrick Hudson

*Feeling Sorry for Myself after the
Collapse of Civilization*

I . . . I guess it'll be okay, all of those winged, man-headed bulls
guarding the temple precinct. Or the avenue

of sphinxes and zodiacal complaints from the ziggurat. Or

the fire altar to Ahura-Mazda and its feathered priests stiff
in their embroidered robes shuffling

through the gold dust and rose petals. It'll be okay when
King Sargon II and his son

Ashurbanipal the Cruel, with their identical crimped beards
and tiny parasols tilted over their heads by chanting slaves,

compel us to walk in rigid procession down to the riverbank
to cheer the obsidian knives and the slow

murder of captives. Or that morning after the latest debacle

when they have us down at the beach to flog
the disobedient ocean with chains. And I'm okay figuring out

the new calendar, I guess. The new heroes and headdresses . . .

In any case, money's always money, you know, and a guy's
got to eat. So I'll mumble along to the new

songs. I'll take my duties and instructions
off the side of the obelisk. I'll kneel and anthropomorphize

things pitiless and dead. Things such as holy crocodiles and
elephants' skulls, both the setting sun

and the waxing moon, and whatever shadows either casts.