

**Poems While Proctoring- “You Have Five Minutes Remaining
in This Section”**

Raymond Pape

When you leave here, by the way,
Assuming this is your last exam,
You’ll never hear anyone tell you
Such a thing again.

No waitress, for example, will harangue
You to chew more quickly because
Your dinner hour is almost through.

No spouse of yours will stand above you while
You fold laundry to remind you how long it’s been or
How long this task should take.

No child of yours will announce this to you
When he or she is leaving grade school,
High school, college, or home, or getting married,
But strangely, you’ll always know just how much
Time you have left for each of these occasions.

Perhaps sometime, hopefully much later,
A grim faced doctor may give you
Bad news that might remind you of my
Telling you this so many times today.

And like now, you’ll react in kind: a redoubled effort, where you’ll
crazily click your calculator (are your figures all in order?),
Where you’ll read as fast as you can (letters, books, pamphlets).

You’ll go at life as best you can ‘til time is called, or else,
Calmly stare ahead, eyes closed, waiting,
Because you’ve long been finished with this section.



Raymond Pape is an English teacher at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School in Hamilton, MA, and is a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell where he is examining voice in student writing. He can be reached at r.pape@hwschools.net