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Poem

Lacrimation

Richard Kravitz 

It's a good word to have around
 (From the Latin, of course.
 Lachrymose is prettier, that c-h-r-y!
 and the heartbreaking *lacrimosa*—)
 because how else are you going to describe what happens
 when you chop onions (propanethiol S-oxide is the culprit,
 and you start to tear up.
 It can get bad enough (even your nose starts to run)
 that you feel sad, like a good method actor,
 or a child.

And then there's heroin withdrawal.
 That can get intense: sneezes and sweats,
 hair on end, agonizing spasm and pain,
 a feeling that leaves you whimpering,
 curled up in fetal position, ready to die
 or steal.

Hay fever can do it too, seasonal allergies,
 turning joyous spring into a runny, mucousy mess,
 tortoise tears streaming past leporine laughter.

Or when the military veteran, young or old,
 tells you about his service, where and when,
 and then, eyes wide in alarm,
 remembers whom he left on the field,
 whom, still now, he needs to bring home,
 Mary, weeping all the world's tears,
 Cradling her child spilled over her arms.

Oh, and the forgotten child,
 hurt and hidden so many years,
 huddled within. How would we find you,
 know you're still alive,
 without the wet of unbidden tears?

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