How to Avoid Being Put Back on the Ward

1st Place - Poetry

Steve Henn

What I didn't tell
my psychiatrist
the day I visited
to get my 'scripts rewritten
was that every night
when I smoke
on the front porch
I see a light
above the treeline
beyond the house
across the street.
It twinkles suspiciously unlike a star
and hints an odd flash of red,
convincing me that it's
an unmarked black helicopter
training a camera
that can see through walls
on my house, to watch
my every move, including
where and how I compose
my tracts and manifestos,
and the odd, unsanitary places
I leave shreds of paper,
bits of fingernail, cookie crumbs
and bottle caps like insults
to the hearth spirits, the guardian
angels, those flashes and shimmers
who would keep me safe. What I did
tell him was, I've been feeling
a bit more anxious and
I'm thinking of quitting smoking.