

Central Park Counterpoint

1.

They begin to sprout
as I near the exit
closest to Grand Army Plaza
walking south from the zoo:
poems short enough to fit
on metal plaques each
a few inches square,
fastened to the backs of benches
on either side of the walkway.
I cannot read them all because
people are sitting in front
of some, but decide
to share three with you
in order to illustrate the genre:

QUOTE: "My beloved was mine
and I was his"

QUOTE: "To honor a man
of integrity and compassion"

QUOTE: "This bench,
like our friendship,
should endure forever"

It is not, I admit, the kind of material
likely to find its way into a prestigious
literary journal. You or I would surely
express ourselves with greater dexterity.

And yet could it possibly be
with greater sincerity?

2.

Then someone stands up, revealing
words that make me reconsider.
And I am compelled, therefore,
to quote these as well
(this time with attribution)
so we both may judge:

QUOTE "59th wedding anniversary
2008:

In June 1943 Lieutenant Nathan Polsky
and his love, Janet, sat here
from dusk to dawn before
he left to serve overseas."

Steve Bloom
August 2008