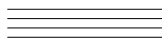


T H E N O - P O N D H E R M I T



N I C H O L A S F R I E D M A N

hadn't had human contact since Chernobyl.
Or, rather, once he squeaked a startled "hi"
to quell suspicion from a passer-by.
His hard-won solitude has now gone global

thanks to a spread in *GQ* magazine,
but once he was the undisputed lord
of all he kept, and all that buoyed or bored
him on the daily. Work never came to lean

against his days; Monday was just a thought
that joined the welter in the minds of others.
Of course there *were* inevitable bothers:
to steal, well, *everything*; to not get caught;

to not light fires for fear of that. To live.
Funny to think that his foremost ambition
was dodging what we'd die for: recognition,
as if life's crowning purpose were to give

biographers a steady lead to follow.

*J. Salzman was, for thirty years, the dean
of Arts and Sciences. He reached the mean
income in record time. His vague and hollow –*

et cetera. Folks long presumed him dead,
but hidden cameras caught him pilfering
coffee, Smarties, and hamburger last spring –
all from a campground dining hall, the spread

explains. Now, he awaits a public trial –
and judgment by a jury of his peers.
His hopes and fears are not our hopes and fears.
His glasses are three decades out of style.