

The League of Failed Superheroes

with apologies to Cypher

One by one, we gave
our powers back
until I was the last holdout.

Being Language Man
should have been grander
than any school of poetry.

I could understand
every tongue, every dialect,
both current and across

the scope of human experience,
including every variety
that ever faded into oblivion.

What finally broke me
was this: picture a
crowded, upscale restaurant.

At the next table, a couple
argues in rapid Mandarin.
As heads turn toward them,

I eavesdrop
and understand every
angry word, each bitter

recrimination. But then
I realize everyone else
in the room has grasped

exactly what is going on
and returned

to their veal piccata

and their smart phones.
Nothing more to hear.
As the woman dabs her eyes,

his suddenly meet mine.
Neither of us
knows what to do or say.

David E. Poston