CLOSET PREACHER

There’s a church marquee
in the backwoods of Appalachia
that reads …
    Words are the clothes that thoughts wear.
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Like fashion, words are chosen,
the brain searching an entire closet
    back to front
    the cubbies and shelves
for the snappiest attire
to relay the style of a mood.
Is it a blingy or shabby-chic kind of day?
Is it something Goth or frilly I’m trying to say?
Or will it come out as an airing of dirty laundry …

Whatever it is,
dress for success
with your address.

    Words are the clothes that thoughts wear.

For something that takes just 600 milliseconds
to go from thought to blurt
    —including a quick grammar check in between—
600 milliseconds is not much time for a fitting.
No 3-way mirror
no try before you buy
no coat check.
Spoken words are token swords
in the battle for connection.

    Words are the clothes that thoughts wear.

And they’re totally pro-choice!
You can hem their length
Let out the waist
Mend a tear
Add starch
    Even darn a human-sized hole.

So if that tiny deep forest church is right
and thoughts are raiding wordrobes,
that makes us all designers
baring our wears
on the runway of life,
chosen according to weather
and comfort
    and hopefully kindness
    which, of course, is always in fashion.

Farewell poem from outgoing San Miguel County Poet Laureate Daiva Chesonis (2019-2022), recited on January 19, 2022