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Id Biscuits

D.L. Lang

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North Beaching It

"Do not enter the sanctuary," read the sign. No joke!
Ornate Catholic sanctuaries are not for the common folk.

The lady at the café assured us that "Magic is real."
She'd been researching hidden traditions over her meal.

An Afghani rug salesman gave us candy treats
and a warm greeting,
as we roamed the streets.

We ascended the stairs of Vesuvio,
lost ourselves in conversation,
and watched a street fiddler from on high.

On the bar it read,
"T'was a woman who drove me to drink,
and I never had the decency to write her and thank her."

In the window of the bookstore,
was an ironic sign of warning:

Books yield dangerous thoughts,
and firemen will kindly dispose of the whole lot.

The possibilities were a volcano of infinity,
as we walked in the footsteps of artists and beatniks,
drinking in the atmosphere of legends,
and renewing our spirits for the journey ahead.

I walked in a gaggle of commuters to my car in Soma,
witnessed the downtrodden sleeping in unfortunate comas
on sidewalks, bus stops, and tents,
and felt grateful for the bed that awaits me.

Earlier I'd parted with a few lousy cents,
to a bearded gentleman sitting cross legged on the street,
but even my mitzvot aren't enough, you see.

Man and God need to unite so all can be equal and free.

Lines

And in that moment
I saw the barbed wire fence not as a divider,
but as lines of music,
with each bird its very own note.

Birds who would rather fly free,
sitting on the fence, gazing out at me.

One hovers above until we lock eyes,
and then away he flies.

I'm gazing at the glittering sea.
It sparkles as it sings to me
with a million sparkles a minute,
flashing out a melody.

The breeze gives me a shoulder rub,
blows my hair and gives my hat a tug.

Even a photograph couldn't capture
the peace it sets within me.

Out here this city feels like the country.

Once I slow down,
you wouldn't believe the freedom.

I see a runner rush past me,
and no longer do I wonder
why we can never see beauty.

Most fail to look,
as the future pulls and the past pushes.

Slow down and remember who you are.
If you are down and out,
you must look up and out.

I see the ships come out from the refinery
as the pollution soils the scenery.

It says, "No admittance beyond this point,"
but all I see are fields of green,
so where does one get a ticket?

Home Ghosts

Your mail still arrives,
splayed about on the garage floor,
as if you never truly closed the door.
I mark them with a blood red ink stamp
for their return journey,
and occasionally,
the post office mistakenly
returns them to me.

Occasionally, a foreign object will appear:
A children's book;
A Catholic candle or three;
A photograph;
A box of gemstones;
A glass art panel.

The glass makes me think
I'm not the first artist to live here,
and perhaps the stain glass window
in my living room sanctuary
was created right here.

The most haunting thing is the painting.
Her ghostly face stares at me
with dead eyes from a monotone
brown smeared spirally piece.
It's jarring my inner peace,
but I know not what to do with it.

This house has thirty-five years
of history prior to us.
This house has existed for five more than me.
It's a relic from the 1970s.
A condo in a neighborhood
called Valley of Colors
with a very blocky 70s rainbow.

Skylights, orange shingles,
and slanted walls like my grandparents' house.
Up high on a hill with a balcony like I've always wanted.
Even a bar, though I've stopped drinking for now.
Mushroom patterns inside simple cabinet designs.
Wooden floors that set me dancing.

I'm definitely at home here,
but I wonder about who made this place home before me.
Some had died and some had moved.
I suppose we all do.
I live with the knowledge that for me,
this all will likely be temporary, too.

For death will come or tragedy will strike,
and control, well, control I lack,
over anything but poetry,

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and that is temporary, too.

Vallejo Peace

Every night as we settle into sleep,
sirens and gunfire rise up like a dirge from the street.
This, in our world, is not unique.

Fear and division keeps people apart,
but on this day we choose a new start.

We choose to be great, choose love over hate,
choose kindness over fear, so we can all be freer.

Our culture presents violence as an acceptable option.
I say this idea must cease before we're all in a coffin.

Let us raise our voice against violence as a choice.
We must all be rebels by choosing peace.

We are a rainbow quilt of diversity.
In that we are number one.

Let us all join together and show the world just how it's done.

We are artists, families, and regular folks that will spread the seeds of peace across this town, this state, this nation.

And if we dream it, we can do it!

We can change this world like there's nothing to it.

Today, today has only proved it.

For today in this beautiful city of opportunity,
we joined together in formation.

We united and took first steps for a peace so sweet,
filling this town with love,
voting for goodness with our very own feet.

I'm honored to be among you, sweet city of Vallejo.
Hang onto this unity, my dear community,
and don't ever let it go!

East Maine Noms

In the downtown of Enid—
that's my old home town—
stands a hungry railroad bridge of great renown.
He's 11'4" from his teeth to the ground.

If you're a trucker you best avoid East Maine Street,
because that old bridge is after a treat.
He'll open you up like a can of sardines,
because for the noms, he's quite keen.

He's chewed on a cookie truck,
followed by a soda truck to wash it all down.
It doesn't matter if your cargo's edible.
He's got a taste for yummy scrap metal.
His teeth are ready to chomp on down.

Most bridges say, "Don't feed the troll,"
but this bridge has got its own soul,
and he's ready to make you roll!

So if you find yourself on East Maine,
staring into its mighty white teeth,
you'd best turn your rig around,
or all the local folks are going to laugh you out of town,
along with your autograph upon a ticket
that says, "Pay attention, clown!"

Let's all raise a toast,
to the shark bridge our town created,
as he opens a semi of beer with that smile serrated.

To the Merchants of Bon Air

While out walking in Marin
in your lovely shopping center, then,
one of my good friends spotted a sin:
A giant mural with only white folks in.

This is not the kind of world we live in
nor should it be for artists and merchants alike a valid vision.

All kinds of folks live in Marin.
As an artist, I would say to you then,
please, in the future consider what your pictures are really saying
for to a person of color this can be isolating.
Whiteness is not the default setting
in the rainbow of life.

The utopian mural in Fairfax
is a far more accurate depiction of reality,
as by only showing white folks,
this is no "Fresh New Look"
but an idea that's getting old, you see.

It's not what it's trumped up to be.
Even passing through for mere groceries
was a rainbow of humanity.

If this mural doesn't disappear,
oh, merchants of Bon Air,
bon voyage! I'm no longer shopping there,
even for want of kosher variety on Passover.

Break Out Your Duster

I saw the good people of my city today.
On the steps of the city hall, they gathered.
They chanted to the cement plant, "Go away!"
We don't want you in our city by the bay.

The big cement company and its dust,
aren't a company that we can trust.

They claim in their adverts it's all green,
talking all progress and growth again,
while leaving out pollution from their scenes.

Promising only a couple hundred jobs,
while from our lungs, the air they'll rob.
A couple hundred salaries it ain't worth.
Risking 118,000's health is far worse.

And underneath all that cement dust,
laid a serious breach of community trust.
When the people of my city found out,
They took to the streets with a shout.

It was time to hold a recall for Mayor,
because he'd become a betrayer.
This city, here, well, it deserves better
than back room deals for the highest bidder.

None of this poem is written in cement,
only just giving my two cents.
This is no time to sit on the fence.
If you agree, voice your dissent!

This Project's a Lemon: Sweep 'em Out!

In this city of opportunity live workers and dreamers,
propelling us forward as an artistic, successful place,
one of community, happy families, and open space.
What I can't understand is why you won't stick to that plan?

Your dusty cement plant scheming
needs to be swept right out of here.

Don't get me wrong, I'm pro-union,
pro-high-wage-jobs for this city's peoples,
but this greenwashed pollution ain't the solution
if you give a hoot about our schools, homes, and steeples.

A few jobs aren't worth risking the lungs of our young ones.
Now with all due respect, I gotta ask what the heck?
This secret back room dealing just ain't right,
and the good folks of this town will give you a fight
in the courts or by ballot boxing.

See the people with their protest signs,
asking you to follow the voters' designs, or maybe resign.
If you'd like to stop this city hall circus,
then please, just follow the voter's choices,
and listen to all of our voices.

We didn't elect you to abuse our trust,
so please listen because it seems that you've lost us.
If you work in the shadows, you've got to recuse.
because if you go against the will of we the people,
you're just bound to lose.