

This Duration of Forever

The sidewalks are stores, restaurants, parking lots—the sidewalks are not sides to walk. And you have a history with walking, with starting and stopping, and smelling the acrid perfume of a world not actually ending, although you were promised it was,

Sat at the edge of a time-faded back seat, gray stained with sandwich bag lunches, beach trips, and melted \$1 cones, leaned forwards to catch your father's words that whipped around the car, despite no window being unrolled. When you stared close enough at those hurricane-ing syllables, you read that you would not reach high school, you would not live the plot lines of every teen fiction book you drank for dinner, *you will blink and it will be over and your clothes will be here in this van of your memories, but your body will go one way and your mind will go another, and they will not be reconciled again for the duration of forever.*

A promise is a promise until it becomes a forgotten lie, a mis-truth that when was uttered seemed too large for the sidewalk it languished on, and now has been crowded out by everything, but walking feet.

Edged away by knee-high plastic, bowls of overflowing green herbs whose names have no translations in the language carried in your mind, by crumpled napkins housing lung phlegm, and refuse of too many lives lived in an area measuring one square foot by one square foot.

The sidewalks are speaking, are words not paths, are for listening, not for going places, are saying: *you will blink and it will all still be here, and your clothes will still be limp with sweat on your back and the stink of petrol engines, and your body will go one way and carry your mind along with it and someday they will not be reconciled, but for now you have this duration of forever.*

And so, you do not walk. You sit. You eat. You learn to ride a bike, and you learn to park that bike on mismatched stone, doubling as a street.

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The Commute Home

When confronted with roasted dogs piled four high, the first question that comes to mind is: how did they die? The heads are still attached, were throats slit? And after asking enough questions the answer isn't as easy as a knife through an artery, it's more similar to packing a life into the space of one hundred pounds and then taking that weight a day away to the other end of the ocean, where it is gently placed again into wardrobes, on plastered walls, and shelved according to color.

It's an exciting pain

Or maybe just an end of life pain

Or the pain of passing small bodies on busy streets in the early morning and then again when the sun has started falling from its glass ceiling. And maybe the wrong questions are being asked, rather inquire as to where all the onions have gone to, the cantaloupes, the green curry sauce (that needed more spice added anyways).

There were enough of all these things while the watermelons rotted in outdated machinery and the dragon fruit was cooked into eggrolls, soups, loaves of bread.

But the dogs were boiled alive last night. The line to eat grew within the span of sixteen hours. The hundred pounds were removed from their homes and retraced their steps, now haphazardly tossed into room corners. The yellow bled in streaks and even its stain couldn't be answered with a simple slice of a knife through artery.

It's a missing limbs pain

Or maybe just a lessening of life pain

Or the pain of knowing the answer, when all that was desired was having a question to ask.

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Balancing Acts

Bikes piled high with baby chairs like pretzels in suspension. Like the world can be packed on the end of one moving engine and still keep moving. Together. The balancing act of small things for small places within the span of needing something earth size, something cavernous that swallows echoes and holds onto them liked pickled ginger jars, something that has shelves within its shelves and is vaguely reminiscent of the way the ground feels when the lights are shut out and the music swells to wave crushing crescendos.

The rebellion of a hard pea, fossilized by sunshine and the disdain for consuming circular objects, encircled itself by metric tons of feathered down, quilted needle tracks, a single solitary body.

Like if the traffic light spins red just a tick too soon, it will all crumple inside (the small becoming too wide and too awkward to be adjusted back)

will lie splattered, useless, reeking of fermented root

an echo spit back up

the world no longer moving.

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Loss Pockets

“Ferris wheel at a zoo, get a high up view of the dying dead animals.”

She said it with a piece of her eye missing (it was sitting on her palm, as if it had fallen there on purpose, trying to find the sea it was supposed to be swimming in). But it wasn't all bad, she said. And placed her palm into her pocket.

You never did visit the zoo, see the gaps between the bars, where life was advertised to be, but you spoke as if you had, and had a piece of eye in your pocket as well.

Did you take it out yourself?

But it wasn't all bad, you say. There were five stars, twelve windows, a million rooftops spread all around—just don't look down. Don't ground yourself.

And you reach inside fabric to dance a finger jig with hidden treasure that has since forgotten it was never meant to be searching for an ocean.

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Passionfruit Juice

Arms full of icicles, the dogs follow after, taking cool licks of melting bits whenever they can. Reminds those watching of how things fall apart, of how there's not much to be done in the falling, but there's always someone who manages to benefit. Recalls images of tears becoming lost in hot, soapy water

Of sinking and merging,

learning how to grow from small to big in the span of a single moment.

And the clean dishes that were pulled from the tainted water, baptized in sorrow only to taste the sugar

Of a twilight sun,

the living room air whisking away any trace of washing into a light drenched atmosphere.

Those watching see the icicles disappear into thin plastic cups, lukewarm juice craving an element of frigidity before it becomes inviting to the multitudes of dry throats,

The dogs wandered off minutes passed,

reminds the ice bearer of loss, of being followed and loved,

And then passed by, of not holding onto that which makes one precious because it seems a burden

To hoard so much love

in the warmth of two arms while it continues to leak onto a waiting, outstretched tongue.