

Streetscapes

Sunnylyn Thibodeaux

“a hope that nature still harbors a few anarchic spirits to protect it
against the relentless onslaught of technology, development, and government power”

~David Morris

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Out on Stanyan, cross the divide, where death
monsters shift ahead. Brake light torment. Mothers
lesson through the hand of child. Steady horn.
Pigeons glide. Gather. Fix of light breaking cypress
as it creeps to end the day. On the lawn, bearded stagger
shirtless wandering for the worth of it . Bedding
in the shadows. Cooper says as Cooper does. Roused
and gestured on like pigeons from the spill. Hands
waving in orchestration. Feedback. Harps string. Organ
holds steady float. *They fed us on little white lies.*
The most generous offering. And plenty more
where it came from, abundance was never a concern.

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Last day of the stretch stretched
alongside what was never golden
Headlands layered. Baby melt
(fist-of-sand) down. Dig a hole.
Drown in it. Dig another hole.
Hummer. Helios. Hover.
This could get easier. Head more north
where clothing is optional. The disguise
of mutation won't color me no matter
the direction of the sun. No matter how
little water falls. In this land
tides wash out the imprints we leave.
How impressionable
are those with lined pockets.
Silk. Double-stitched. Import.
The streets have gone sterile.
The bust seems intangible.
The bust. The bust. Even
the baby begs for its return.

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This could be worse

Cherry plums bring all the glory to the frigid
months of a New Year . Though we could easily complain
ever changing skyline— chem. trail, mock cloud. The empire
is drenched in monetary value of compounds (pixie dust) and black
figures that are never dark enough but always seem to have the perfect balance
of shadow. Under belly. Under heel. The voices of privilege
come from behind a code of demise. The everywhere reach,
wind shift. Is privilege to live with material or with nature? Empire
functions solely as profiteer based upon our needs. Always seems
to fit a mold, a category or box. Always truly white in the center. Cut
like zirconia more so than not. Cut like you do frays, trimmings, for more
elegant appearances. Blanket terms cast. Markers for recognition.
The water isn't drinkable and someone forgot to cut out the eyes
for those transplanted figures mockingly wandering the streets.
In the early morning light, you can see the strings glisten.

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Go Ahead, You Deserve It

Two Chinese men smoke
without breathing, squat
then stand, shuffle their
feet, find a seat and shake
their legs.

The stench is of an extinguished
cigar. dog shit. I
check my shoes.

There's a curiosity to the still winter
sky, penetrating blue. What is stronger
the will of the sun or that
of the wind? No one is sure
what to make of it. Me in
shorts, others in scarves

The Chinese men hustle
back indoors. Never speaking
just dragging their feet for sound

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These corners heavy
in cigarettes and cologne. Beats
going gong in the sky. Beats
of foot and route and sound. Thunder
throng east and west. Hired patrol
to aerate the neighborhood. Carve-out-
views only money can buy. These are keepers
of the streets where no new feet will
touch. A virtual picturesque where
no litter sits, no waste lingers. Waste—
decades deep story gone as trade-off
for a dollar. A gazillion dollars.
Count the seconds before it rolls. Thunder
will. Bring it all down. The tetric.
Figures shaped like Greek

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Call our attention to ornamental
whims. Neither the camel nor the man
on the horse make it out alive
Living fossils shedding patterns
on Divisadero. A dozen doors. Winter
sits low and long talking in tongues
to condors. What went better given the conditions
of mysteries. What was chorusing – always the same
voice, sterling. We recognize it in the dark
infiltrated and antagonizing. No one coming
isn't going to save the day. No one's
coming to save anything
but themselves

About the author

Sunnylyn Thibodeaux is the author of *As Water Sounds* (Bootstrap 2014) and *Palm to Pine* (2011), as well as the small books *88 Haiku for Lorca* (Push Press), *Against What Light* (Ypolita), *Room Service Calls* (Lew Gallery Editions) and *Universal Fall Precautions* (Well Greased Press). She left New Orleans for San Francisco to attend (the now defunct) New College of California. She lives in SF with her daughter Lorca and husband Micah, with whom she co-edits Auguste Press and Lew Gallery Editions.