

Lucky dog

Thomas Daniel Valls

Little kids are playing soccer
The ones acting like I used to
Tangling themselves in goalie nets
The parents we never turned into neverminding.
A daddy plays his boombox
For the crowd
Empire of the Sun, remember them
His playlist blaring louder now
You know the one
Remember when we'd heard it
My first time was magic but for you a chore
Over at that spot we used to know
That Extra Fancy
The one where a lady-turned-mommy served us Gansetts
And the lighting looked good enough for oysters?

Do you remember Steve?
That dude
The one
The guy from Full Circle
Cracked us tall boys of Genesee I think
Fixed us that skee-ball machine that one time, then handed over tally chalk for scores?
I think saw him wearing Chinos
Outside of Artichoke
The one on North 7th
By Starbucks
By the Dunkin'
And by the train
Fussing with his iPad
His back sweat looking grody,

Did you know they'd one day grow into what we'd never become?

I suppose I never thought ahead,
Too much looking down
My hand with yours
Or any time we walked along something new
For me,
Polished concrete
Or that hallway towards Larry Lawrence
Though
They've closed it down

It's gone for good.

There's also people here
Who look like what we used to
Doing things we used to be
Though now they've got their White Claws
And Triple-Lens phones
Lounging out on bench-shaped stones
And dreaming upon towers we never knew would exist.

This isn't our spot anymore, isn't it?

Wishing wells erode
Over time
And yet there
Still remains,
Some times at least,
Yesteryear precipices
Those
Mesas on top of pillars
Floating glad-ware lids for canyons
Too large to fresh-seal shut for good.
These plateaus are carved around,
Speckled relics sometimes close
But often far in some ways
Luckily still, like
Lucky Dog and Allswell
They're still there
The promenade at Brooklyn Heights
No
I suppose that one's all me.

The ones once ours
Were they really that
Or just new for me and still good for you?
Did we fall upon a world of our own disgraces
Camel Blue kisses
Or without regard
A concoction of totems familiar to you so familiar you bleed freely?
Their Grand Ferry Park
'Our'
Sapporo's in paper bags
Hands held after
Even after fights
Outside Vanessa's

The one by you
Transplanted from the village
Oils and chopsticks, hangover cure-all.
The smokestack there **S**till remains
The bench where words were said is still there too.

You said something, many things out there, you remember?

Like out up on your roof,
No,
I've never forgotten what you said to me and
PJ knew it too
I knew her after you but somehow she knew it then
'You are this city to me.'

Two times you'd told me.

The first a proclamation
The second a surrender to decision,
To you leaving
We won't go there yet
But the first my God
Muttered whisper ignites the waterworks
Lullaby under bridge's rumble
Commotion of stampeding thunder
You mumble like
Soft rain in Spring
But Spring between Morton and Barrow,
I look up under bridges still
Because on top is where you showed me where the river bent
You hold me
Hasids are watching
Freedom Tower's going up
And Empire's not knowing what reigns will trump its spire.

The Domino sugar factory was still there, wasn't it?

Remember the cranes?
Or Glasslands for rock?
Camel Blue's from your pocket
Another Sapporo.
Clouds of smoke...
Though with certainty we'd know
It'd all soon change.
We knew we'd leave.

The geotag was ours but so soon
These towers would be new again
And they are
Bleaching skyline and our promises
Into something out of Mars.

Daddy's soccer playlist is still going.

A mommy's thrown a football
To her little boy
'Good one, Adam'
They're playing sports now
The ones who'd grovel for a taco at our Union Pool
No, Theirs.

Perhaps they always did.
Grow, I mean, No,
Knew they'd have to. Grow.

Grow into something they had to be, by choice or missed train
That shaped into them Gwyneth Paltrow yuppies with cleats and doggy-walking apps.
Perhaps I never noticed
Seeing now
As city people grow
And move and have
And watch and know
I held on expecting it to stay the same
No not this town but
The dream of you and me
Perhaps, I think,
And.
It's like.

Should LA ever burn,
We'd have concretes where Blue Bottle used to be,
Remember when that was new? Wouldn't you like that?

How're your wedding plans coming along?

No.

Wishing wells erode,
I know that now.
And yet,
There still remains

Our chiseled
Relics of the beaches we laid on for dead Winter's Sun,
Like sand in the shoes, there's a ring around this toilet of our town.

I wish it came with a drain,
So once all was dry
I could climb down and spelunk and
Maybe then I'd find
The reasons why you left me
After choosing me
Your City
Your place, apparently,
And your ghost.

Searching the streets that led us to our high lives
I haunt them now
Right now
These mesas
And these bars of cities we once knew,
As if for the first time.

But whiskey's tasting old.