

Going Nowhere

On mornings when the mist on the river is old and
vulnerable
when the bridge is anchored in forgetfulness
and headlights no more threatening than rainswept
fireflies
and the radio's clarinet concerto - its smoothly silver
spirals -
has lost its lustre
there's no forgiveness in a cup of coffee
no linen waiting warm with last year's sunlight
only cold metal, a straight-backed chair
a door with a rusted key

and what you remember and what you weep for
are the moments of childhood
yours, anybody's, the cool hand on a fevered brow
the soft voice, *are you all right?* -
though you're not, and never can be.
These are the moments when we tell our little stories,
how the children moved out and left their imaginary
friends;
one gives you a teddy bear, one a stuffed cow for your
pillow.
You're never lonely, just sad that your pen dries up.

And suddenly our stories are telling *us*
in the kindest whispers
embracing us as a poet might a long lost metaphor
or a classmate who died young.
They rise like smoke and hover
going nowhere, like the bridge
refusing to name the season.

Time's run out, left us grieving for all those moments
we thought
God gave us to do up buttons, wait for the timer's
ding, the egg soft but not runny.
Tomorrow is one day closer to summer - call off
Spring's suicide watch, let it go, bury it in an unmarked
grave -
sweep the scourge of dead leaves from the back porch,
bring flats of impatiens from the market,

take down the empty raisin jar from your grandmother's
pantry shelf
let it fill up with sunlight

or wake, having dreamed it's done and done as always –
nothing to do but wait for the next crop of angels
pick out the one most likely to learn your language
kiss her cheeks, garland her hair with forget-me-nots,
ask if her wings can heal you

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