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Traveling Home

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Traveling Home

The scent of jasmine on the street still gives me pause.
It is twilight, and in a quiet hollow of the city
I follow a road still paved in cobbles.
Were I driving, this road would jar my back,
rattle my foot on the brake. Walking,
it is merely a pause in stride, a slight adjustment.

I loved you first in the long-windowed studio that I call home,
where we sat over tea and dark chocolate until the trees
moved from black back to gray-green.
Those fading nights were the only time bird-song
was louder than the city's traffic, and the grate of wheels
over steel track did not send me in and out of restless dreams.

Together, we wrote poetry rooted in familiar things, wove stories
for one another from the details of our days—
the click of high heels on wet pavement, the pressure
of a strangers handshake, the tough, filigreed web
a spider dared to weave in the mouth
of a construction worker's upturned hat.

It was the tea that smelled of jasmine.
That's why my mouth is watering before I recognize the scent.
I imagine that tonight, my skin will bare the flowers' taste
though there is no one to tell me so, and I pass
the blossom-laden branches slowly
head tilted back, seeing in emerging stars
the dregs of a near-empty cup.

—Katie Kroner '01