

father's day on longwood avenue

returning to that abandoned past of youth,
bronx neighborhood of her father's house,
a five story structure, still, but standing.
where once his tall husky frame sat
in a top floor window, drinking beer,
as she watched from below,
in awe of this person, she barely knew.
three blocks south from him,
the beck street tenement she first claimed as home,
last year, torn to the ground.
nineteen years tumbled into shadows,
where only dust traces of rubble remain,
names of neighbors, best friends, disappeared.
and in the place where her room once held her,
where she became alive, cried,
and learned to love her mother,
studying the world through windows facing the sun,
chanting incantations to the Moon
of top forty hit parades
in forth floor ghetto repertoire,
space of broken concrete, limping paint,
so dear, the only water she knew,
now a lane through a park where lovers walk
over new matted rungs of prefabricated astroturf.
while memories of building linger in trees,
titi julia's apartment one, where life began,
now air and space where birds fly in symbolic liberation
spirit of her home set free,
an unraveled karma.
while the shell of her father's house endures,
a monument braced against the elements.
roof leaking to basement, only rates take notice.
winds howling lonely sonatas, no one hears.
a single pigeon flies west, silhouetting sunset.
she remembers a young woman of thirteen
looking for the last time at this stranger
not seen for twenty-six years,
wondering who he was.

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