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On the Move

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On the Move

By Jack Cooper

Arriving

I caught the bus to the beach
under a blue and white sky
and sat behind five or six riders
all with the dazed look of the car-less and out of sorts
who had lost the distinction between medicine and food
The driver was a soldier of the wheel
who attacked traffic as the enemy
in her rush to keep a schedule that no one trusted
and everyone cared deeply about

The wheel came to a jerky stop in a lot
where the parking lines had been painted
just before two pigeons dropped down for some caramel corn
leaving loopy trails of white bird-prints
back and forth across the wet surface
as if designing spaces for anyone arriving from the clouds

Leaving

We're leaving these wounded beasts of the streets
this impeccable anonymous apartment
this dry and incandescent co-habitation with ambition
to wonder among dripping leaves
the smell of mycelia
and a hundred seasons of shade
Adieu to this incredible indigestible city
its fantasies and exaggerations
its nonrenewable decay and constant emergency

God's speed to places safe to go at night
that have nothing to do with falling stars
or rising rivers or creatures nested in their differences
We ache for dirt and clouds and canopies
for the unsettled unpainted garden
of long-buried inclination

