

Sun Flower Sutra

Was this, indeed, what it was supposed to be like,
New York, in summer, this sumac-leaved stammer,
the landscape of ineradicable grit, and towers built
as though to escape the ground they bedded in?

She walked south on Canal past City Hall choked
with an ingress of the smallest cogs of governance.
It was 8:43, and the morning light felt like coarse
linen on the fine lines of her face, her arms exposed.

A dog was peeing, a gusher washing dust from
a front tire, an Escalade's, braced against the curb.
Now, the water came up to lap at its rocky bank.
A derelict tried for a quarter and shambled away.

"And what street compares with Mott Street," she
thought, and thought of Nathan Road where she'd
bought red silk panties whose color bled, staining
the inside of her thighs the first time she wore them.

Somehow, the signs had become confused. One
whispered "79th" and another "3rd Ave." A kiosk
guarded the corner. Doughy pretzels hung looped
from a wooden cart, its owner off taking a leak.

Then, the city turned over, its concrete radiating
heat into the suffocating air. The sky fell open.
A bloom like a dust of pollen overlay the dead cars.
She became the ash the sun scattered everywhere.

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