

HOLLYWOODLAND

We are the letters that spell Hollywood and we are deceptively small.

From the mid-town bus stop between Sunset and Melrose
we rise over the new Buddhist temple building
like the scree of brake dust rising into the carriage of the canyon
where the smoggy evening has left us,
we straddle the undark sky.

We take your eyes, we draw them closer in
the adequate spondaics, our strophic verse.
It is one unwinding son coming, one going.
And on his lips, our chain of mercy.
To whom we leave the sceptre and the ring,
well-loved of his own body, discerning not
his lavish repose, by slow prudence wanders
a sprawling rugged people, and through them we work to
suffer the lustly doing of useful deeds, our mercy is
where the red line stops under the waking streets,
her bloodshot lids flash where the drinkers meet.

In our nine-part vertebrae hangs a Hollywood history that only
we have ever seen.
Stacked like studio apartments with tiny gas ranges
in turn-of-the-century buildings with classy names.
We see the other commuter life.
Tourists troll the newly paved streets
breathing lastly, and spending much
with our pale heirloom trinkets on
and they valet park right in the shit of it
snapping lenses and toes on our dirty streets;
smiling bright smiles.

In modern day Los Angeles
her burning veins assemble us a rector of souls.
Marking the twenty-minute pulse repletion,
in an unparalleled sufficiency of motion
ours is a series of absences.
Yearning the dawn anew, these newer ones
get to the business of snake charming us
substantially off the record, unseen.
Breaking into pieces our inky features
we are troubled hearts combined and wine-to-dined
and revealing as older faces.

In between the students in polo shirts
transsexual anthems and seventy-year-old call girls,
we are all surviving their husbands.
Our descendants are urbane at best and drifting
in dust and desert and smoke.
We of the plain of smokes,
We watch with Baudelaire's eyes
and stand up like Pindar statue skin.
We look upon the lack luster Chaucerian improv.

ME NDE SMITH

Mende Smith almost has her Bachelor's degree. Her work has been published in Literary journals and chapbooks on three continents in the past 2 years. In 2010, she received a writing department award for her poem 'The Laundress' in the twelfth annual writing contest at Los Angeles City College. On Mende's weekly blog talk radio show (Writing On Demand) she hosts a myriad of contemporary writers and poets on the business of writing life. She is a mic-carrying member of the Hollywood Institute of Poetics and a new voice on the World Wide Word Radio Network. Some things she has been; wife to mother and wife again and single again. Now she just writes. Mende lives in Los Angeles.

