

Jeff Burt – Two Poems

Urbanal

It's not all drive-through, drive-by
looking to not look at the homeless,
concrete, dust, grease,
invisible iron bar
holding the banks straight
for the crooked bankers.

We walk from block to block
like sailors island-hopping
hoping for an atoll of reprieve
and find it—a public park
where people bloom and kids blossom,
discs ricochet off loose chains
and grunts of satisfaction echo
on the unstriped basketball court.
The leaves swept by the wind
turn their undersides like submissive dogs.
The shade cools.

We hunt downtown, the main drag
no chain pulling us like prisoners
but a magnet of ogees and angled ledges,
sines and co-sines and quadrilaterals,
a tipped jar holding a juice bar and tattoo shop,
a concourse of plain speech
and raised heads of acknowledgement.

Tall buildings eat sunshine,
outcroppings of rock channel
the river of the wind, creating currents and ripraps,
riparian causeways we navigate,
swimming like schools of fish in congregation.

Reference

Almanacs once predicting weather
now taken from shelves
create their little storms of dust.

Calendars marked with birthdays
have names of people
that I remember I can't remember.

Raised with an atlas on a dark wood floor
I note nations taken up or given back,
how land stays still but possession circulates

Jeff Burt lives in Santa Cruz County, California, with his wife. He works in mental health, has been published in *Spry*, *Terrene*, *Rabid Oak*, and *Homestead Review*, and won the 2017 Cold Mountain Poetry Prize.