

Staying In Place Staying In Place

by Carol Dorf

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The way each intersection
in a city where you've lived a while
becomes layered with personal archeology

The cafe that replaced a liquor store you avoided,
and the friend (or lover) you broke up with there,
and the way on the day of the big fire you passed
this corner as she said, "no, this isn't much, just grass
in the hills." Somehow in this place, even disaster
passes into ordinary life: insurance, contractors.

Unfold the map of all the places you have ever worked,
the colleagues you have run into, and the way
they complain about some of the same people
and some new ones you've never met, and you nod,
like, of course, I get exactly how it is to sit at that desk,
in that cubicle, and how it feels when that creep
stands in the entry, leaning against both walls at once.

This is the prequel to moving to Honolulu
or Prague, places full with narratives no one
could expect you to know, but peaceful at the moment.
You choose someone else's landscape to drink
coffee in, while you observe the morning commute.

