

The Parade Path

by Johnny Dantonio

Beautiful,

a country left abandoned by the parade path.
The soldiers that typically occupy this place,
temporarily removed to neighboring lands;
congregating together,
backs to the native.
I benefit from the accidental diversion.

A spotlight sun meanders down the avenues
when the structures allow it,
offering me guise and quiet.
I come across some wounded,
the left behind;
tattered overalls covering what remains of old men
who have been here forever,
their faces painted,
their vehicles in costumes of mockery,
the very ridicule they fly proud
for the young soldiers,
the every day soldiers,
the soldiers who will speak behind their smiles,
“I hope I die before I become him”.

My pass is unnoticed,
the jesters too cared with preparation;
A rite for them,
a white flag to cheer for.

The last block before sanctuary is a dark one,
floats crawl laterally at both ends of the road,
I walk north in the desolation between the traffic.
The cars cause the serpentine sun to blink,

biting at my shrinking silhouette,
a slow, straight walk,
heel-toe
down a dotted white line.

