

This city like a squall

by Lisa Simmons

Jackhammered men hollow out the building,
cart away decade-old works of other men.
Exterior walls stand. Rooms have been demolished.
In another day see what came before progress.
See trees.

A squall is coming.
Ask about the weather every day
but rarely leave the house.
Every warm day the clouds' striations
and glowing colors massing low over sunsets
thrill mysterious at day end.

You know this block, this lot; it was a roller rink
you skated in as a teen. Now it's the high-rise where you live.
Like seasons, cities move and change.
The buildings of a block bossed around by harsh weathers.
Squall is an unruly configuration of wind and water.

Perhaps these buildings will live in a photo
or as a smell in the back of your mind,
rain on hot asphalt late on a summer's day, *petrichor*.
The foyer where you hang your dusty mirror
was hallway to the desk where you exchanged skates for shoes.

Once I could skate for hours in a loop around my basement floor,
tiny polyurethane wheels flying me around,
grinding concrete into a delicate choking dust,
which I thought if mixed with water,
would again become part of the harder substance it used to be.

