

# Istanbul

by Neil McCarthy

They are plastering on lipstick in pay-to-enter toilets  
around the corner from the mosques, where old men  
sit on back streets selling toilet seats, spices by the  
shovel, flashlights, and Audrey Hepburn t-shirts;  
the city going about its day like a petulant child,  
pushing us on impatiently, racing ahead and turning  
back to beckon us to catch up, to buy whatever it points  
at, to stay up late with us and tug at our shirts to the  
extent that we take refuge in a café across the bridge  
from the Grand Bazaar to watch the helium moon float  
and burn above the Bosphorus while murmuring a prayer  
to the Marmara or to whatever god is above us that we'll  
sleep with the belief that we had found something new.

