

On a bridge in Regensburg

by Neil McCarthy

To hear my name, called out across the Roman stones on a
bridge in Regensburg through the languid March drizzle,
was to breathe again as my head burst through the water.

Two lovers in the corner of the Black Bean cafe exchanged
mocha tongues and disregarded censorious onlookers;
me with an envious pang of I've-worn-that-t-shirt as I passed.

I have for too long been hitchhiking in the opposite direction
to which the world is going, malingering through the medium
of other people's beds, but more often their couches.

This incessant journeying, these photographs that document
the ages of my illusory face, this cracked black pepper light
on my skin at night is but a stopgap grace.

On a bridge in Regensburg, my head bobbed up when beckoned
and, for a second, I was home again; a mother's call from the
kitchen door to a boy and his dogs just two fields away.

