Last Night On Oil Street

by Nicolette Wong

The Commune

Spray paint ecru to heat searing through my fingers I'm leaving this block of farce we've inhabited and lost: the rights to sleep facedown on canvas, away from red taxis and men shuffling in and out of banks, briefcases in hands to waste their lives; the rights to swing glass doors to the garden, benches to roll beer bottles and halve embraces to dark bird songs. Some left the commune long before their doors were plastered. Scurried for shelter where they played statues besides their art for visitors.

Tomorrow the authority smashes. Tonight we march, splash, carve letters in wet paint from room to room until steel blades bend. The letters will tilt in shadows gliding over the walls to mask our tales born of fractured wrists and the ghosts, our keepers.

The Ghosts

We're the last departure before the sea rips for sand to kill surf and stretch the land our neighbors have feared. People who tread shaky ground while we snooze behind tree trunks in sunlight and sit on tree beds at night to look for scars that seep through our skin every time one of us cracks to a token of forgetting or betrayal by a living beloved. The hurt reaches us. You just don't hear it.

Our home has been transit for heaps of the dead the drifters the children smearing paint on their lips, their colored fingers our joy when our eyes are shut. Until we wake crackling. Our last night so lost in searchlights in alchemy of fury the children we're losing at dawn.

We lose them. We're gone.

The Trees

Everybody hurts to scratch our songs like sandstones. We grow bleeding oxidized bands to break free, leafy rhythm on the swing. The dead strum us; we lift each other.

To their missing weight we'll shed to touch stone benches. To leather boots on dried leaves and hammers smashing across the

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/nicolette-wong/last-night-on-oil-street»*
Copyright © 2012 Nicolette Wong. All rights reserved.

corridors to our breath rasping in the garden. Red bricks shooting out of the windows to clutter of handrails, chairs, stained white bathtubs in the backyard to gape: “Our companions have left us.” Cracked down the middle. Electric air to hum.

The broken fellows will call to us but we'll turn deaf while we shrivel in the afternoon. Our magic will dissipate just in time for the saws to cut through us and we'll bleed and bleed to show who's grounded.