Beginnings

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Beginnings

By Pete Karagianis

I see it in their faces sometimes
In their smiles, I understand
It isn’t that easy when you’ve got to sing to yourself for five hours
For a week
Not that easy when you have no music
Nothing but the blues in your head
Remembering the one thing
That makes you want to keep singing
Redemption in the small things

Isn’t it nice to have a favorite restaurant
Somewhere you can sit down and remember the booth
Or remember the waitress, a buttoned-down blouse
White as the snow
After three days of automobiles
Isn’t it nice to have this place
How do you want your cup of coffee this morning
Darker than when you can’t sleep
Sugar to make it sweet
A little white stuff to take the edge off
Creamed

A five hour trip
I remember where they came from
Isn’t it nice to have a story to share, a question to ask
I fell out of the car
Scrambled and fried
The music had been rattling in my head
I had been singing to myself for too long again

It’s never that easy when you know that you’re about to settle down
For good
Times always seem to go by so fast
Isn’t it nice to have your whole life ahead of you
What a thought
You already know how it will pan out
All this I wanted to tell her at the restaurant
Redemption in the small things
I said
Don’t you understand that song
It’s nice to have a work to drive to
Those five minutes to yourself at the beginning of your day
How would you like to pay for that
Cash
In your tokens before the next shift
In the fault line
Brings everything crashing down around you

Haggard from working for thirty years with nothing to show for it
But a few pieces of paper with pictures on them
People who haven’t called her
For years
By her first name
Isn’t it nice to think you’re making a difference
That one glint, that shine, that flash
Of lights behind you because you were going too fast again
But for a second
You were almost there
I meant to warn you back there at the restaurant.

And then you are just at the beginning
Everyone telling you to do
What you want to do. The world is yours, they say, take it
Take redemption in the small things
Listen to me, I’ve been there, not too long ago
I’m only five hours away now
A five hour trip
Shakes me wildly
But now she is just at the beginning
Isn’t it nice to only have to go so far
Each day
To know of things like comfort and family and homes
Again
This is your beginning you have not started yet
I can see it in your face.

The street musician plays loudly
Isn’t it nice to hear the saxophone louder than the cars
How would you like to hear a song
With your words put in
A big pot and churned back out, hurled onto the street
Some big burly man had thrown me to the hard cement
Looking at me like I’m on some kind of trip
Isn’t this where my old house was I said

How would you like to give a quarter to the sax player
He understands
Redemption in the small
Coins he slowly fills his case with
A few mementos of his life, he is beginning
To stop playing now
But I remember this instrument
So well held in your hands even though you never played for me
I remember well how you looked holding it
I could see it in your face
Dreams of bronze music bellowing out in mellow notes
Soothing and deep
Your hands
Moving effortlessly
Over me
All this I wanted to tell her, but she left too soon
Stuck me on a five hour trip
That I can’t remember
Wasn’t it nice to be able to sleep at night

That moment of pause
When it should be prayers
Those five minutes
At the beginning of your dreams
Save those for me