

Jon Riccio

Tomorrow, the Rubble & Other Poems

↳ Tomorrow, the Rubble ↳

It was a brothel with tiles that turned
to diamonds when viewed from the stairs.

The rafters held a weathered swagger. The arches
revealed a bathhouse drained of its shimmer.

Some suggested a shopping center.

The school board wanted it razed.

Voters passed a millage. The mayor deemed
it a hazard. Council members provided the cranes.

The chains clanged – gun metal against gauze –

a decade since AIDS had fused the doors,

bolt cutters the building's only sound in years.

The chains fell, garters on a tainted floor.

Tomorrow, the rubble.

Tonight, the wiring of tombs.

We brought dynamite to a plague.

Bound the railings in caps, strung sticks

past bundles of pylons clustered

as shrines to men long diseased.

We lined the explosives from basement

to attic, hard hats privy to I-beams and an illness.

The foreman murmured something about

asbestos, the softness in his voice an alcove

untethered of its frame.

One of the crew members prayed.

You'd think the girders were saints.

The detonator glimmered,

the brothel purged.

My final visit, I wept.

↳ Rent Boy at Street Fair ↵

A woman vends magnets from her trolley-

booth. A smoothie caulks traffic,

my crown of straws a statue

of liberties you see right through.

How did I lose my fear of crowds?

By focusing on the ankles in front of me.

Dear artist with the power scooter and fingers

eager, I'd let you paint my face but for the cuts.

As for the man in the Ford Explorer hurling

hate crimes like they were ceramics, the streetvines

told me how you spent the autumn of '82.

↳ **The Patroness Offers You a Drink** ↵

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Mix me a Shirley Temple, teach ambrosia
to swim, make it a Death Star of Detroit.

My glowstick matches your bidet.

Those anthills exhibit art.

Oh, music.

Yes.

This close to a Strad.

The Carnegie Hall of stupors.

I thought they said twelve Mets,

didn't give it up

so much as an ultimatum

sauntered into my canal,

had the equilibrium annulled.

↳ Found Poem on a Box of Tide ↵

Caution: Original

See crystals for details

Scoop 15 biodegradable minutes

Redeem 50 US states

Manufacture children

Limit one per Gamble

Do not induce households

For heavily soiled machines

May irritate water

Go to WWW dot old glassful of poison

Rinse while enzymes last

Your doctor will sample

Read large paperboard

Trademark efficiency

US residence guaranteed

Visit us first

Aid may irritate eyes

The precise number of measures for color fastness

1

Private labels will stain

↳Phonal Sangria↳

A Bourbon vendor found herself
in the wine tote belonging to a man
who'd broken the Chateau she called heart,
made almonds of the way she delegated
the corners of eyelashes bristle-up while fumes
of hazel curtseyed at a Grenadine pace,
peppered the handsome out of sideburns,
apologized to jowls.

Into Cuervo's hangnail she went,
a martini of barcode and port,
juice betrayer, the conveyor
a ratty kaleidoscope
liquoring the world's cruellest finger
as she flowed from bagboy mudslide
to the rock-a-bye of Malbec and vent
nibbling Gallo air, the Camry's odometer
like Spumanti playing speeding tickets
against dried pens as they quenched

the coffee-logged floor, his paystub
swiping reduced-calorie beer,
petroleum from the pump,
stalactites of CD poking into produce
on whose belt Triple sec slumped.

That should've been warning enough –
Kenny G., un-bagged broccoli,
cranberries free of their twist-tied lives,
the way he sauntered up to the career of her
like wholesale Scotch and bad-breath kith,
his xiphoid process flexed
youthful as crow's feet aloof,
Zinfandel laying claim to the yes/no
of conditional Merlot, the ambrosial
xylophone in her pocketbook whisked
from a life of vintners whose bellies
usurped the Shiraz till it was Sauvignon besmirched,
his redolence mired in quinine with a sprig
of committal, the Bourbon-woman's

predicament like Thursday's Kahlua
and Old Milwaukee chrome, the tote's
nectar practically myocardial, bejesus dispirited,
her livelihood of tumblers and tip jars
reduced to ketchup, magnets, some Rhinelander
jolting the Cabernet to its dustpan Ides –
he with his sangria and slew, she with a manifesto
gleaming, the Smirnov careening.

From this pantry she will burgeon, begin,
embellish the shot glass earth around Julep's nape,
dedicate the afterhours to Pangaea Deux, continent eight,
her role from loveless to landmass begotten, this pimento
of billions in their screw-driven days
needing a good stiff drink.

Author Bio

A first-year poet in the University of Arizona's MFA program, Jon Riccio recently moved from Kalamazoo, Michigan, to Tucson. He attended Oberlin College and the Cleveland Institute of Music where he trained as a classical violist. His work has appeared in *The Bear River Review*. Jon has participated in summer poetry workshops at Vermont College of Fine Arts and Sarah Lawrence College, among others. He serves as an editor on the *Sonora Review*.

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