

HE WHO LIES ON THE PROMENADE

In Brooklyn Heights brownstone façades hold

an etched lie. I know, I know, pictures

lie : cropped, airbrushed, digitized. The frame

in being a frame excises time, motion.

Motion pictures lie more as we pan windows

and doors, turn onto the Promenade

to scale Manhattan's fortress : horizontal, vertical

sprawl of glass and steel with its empty

space, twin sentinels excised, Lorca's *hueco*

the absence, the ache the eye enacts

as it traces auras, silhouettes, certain synapses

still connected, rerouted each day.

Yet in the lie of human time a deeper shift

fails to register in the cityscape. Turn

away from the Empire State, forget

the bridge for a moment. Look south.

Helicopters halo Lady Liberty, spike

her torch. Ellis Island's a pattern

of crenulated walls. Ferries and sailboats

slice through the brown river's tiny

white caps. I see you're drawn back

to the piers, the smaller buildings.

I know, I know; it's hard to escape. Focus

on the bridge, then, its stone and wire.

It reaches out, solid and slight. Marin's
bridge asserts itself in a purple arc,
color straddled with a hint of line. A boat's
double masts puncture the bridge
like goal posts at the point where the platform's
arc hits its height and cables dip
to the zero point. The masts echo the double
gothic arches, a lone tower's eyes
and melt with the ship's hull into purple
ripples. Yes. Another picture.
Another lie. Is it? Do you feel a eulogy
browning the façades? Do I speak as if
the bridge no longer exists? Rest assured
Brooklyn Bridge still fixes us with its
otherworldly stare. So what do I eulogize? Not
what you think. It's there and not
there, what has passed from this world, what
rushes in to fill its space.
So what is it that makes something
not exist, even if it's there?

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