# Fall

May 1, 1997 By David Groff

In New York's streets, summer's odors bloom again,
Streaking the air with piss, a season's worth
Of fatty suppers, and all the human oils.
Shirtless, reprieved and eyeing each other,
The brave one's strut, risking pneumonia.

The doctors sent Marc home as almost bones.
His mind had flaked like summer skin,
Or to be precise, the virus had blurred its distinction,
Stepping Indian file through the capillaries,
Scorching the brain's earth.

Half-blinded, he forgot the name of his disease
And lay in his bedroom, pale as sheets.
One October afternoon, the heat intense,
He just strolled into the kitchen
Amid the sunlight. He conversed with you.

Was it the heat that made him so coherent,
Amused at your hair, so fakely blond?
And what exactly made him laguh,
Palms curled around a coffee cup? He was really beautiful,
The sun washing out of the hollows from his face.

Long since stripped of hope, stunned and afraid,
You carried his wheelchair to the roof
And sat him, wrapped in a quilt, by the ledge,
All of Chelsea just beyond his knees.
Then the wind picked up, men slid on their shirts.

Clouds sprawled across the sun, smells sank distinctly
Back into the pavement, the pigeons soared off the roof
Up through new rain. For him you fell away.
Marc smiled and smiled, his eyes all light.
The chair settled a little in the solidifying tar.

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