

dial tone

by Carla Harris

I float between each invisible scene of repetition
as clocks flippantly return
5:59 into 6:00 am
 ...put your little hand in mine...

If my voice could be published, the first
page of my life, dedicating
the press
ing de press
ion would call to
unread others; from
before, to beyond my time:

You deserve passion. You have earned love.
 Now, and for all remaining days.
 You have that from me.

I struggle to keep upright
as concrete pours past the larynx to
lace the chest in lead;
 turn dry, to wet drowning

You can-No matter-Work harder-Never-Never-Never

my chest clicks and ears ring the
pulse from when we used to hold

our disconnections--
 ERH-ERH-ERH-ERH
never more or less loud,
still in our power to choose to hang up

I often recall the pulsed sound
standing, eyes fixed on the wall

gripping a knotted, spiralled old phone cord
tightly wrapped fist
 I long for existential
verification
 of holding
anything



Carla Harris, Poet & Performance Artist.

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Sidewalk Solutions

by Carla Harris

Each sidewalk, where you notice a
smooth-spread surface, know
it may have been
weathered, unrecognizable in a
photo from a previous day.
Bared, beaten
and worn, each
shattered pebble was a broad
loose tooth in a crumbling face and
I know that all of these are
just re-
pressed
because we are covered with new
concrete solutions many times in our lives.
It's only the walkways that openly bear these
collapses to the world
unapologetically.
I know how that gravel tastes, so I
stand and step
carefully.

In your finely pruned garden, scented flowers and
savory plants are well trimmed.
Herbs balance among berries, vines and flowers
while remaining well watched
but even natural beauty can erupt into scatter.
Crawling weeds heave bricks straight out of the ground
in a few weeks if a greenskeeper can't be there to watch.

Together, we wander staring wordlessly
through passages in each other life's stories
like snapped installations that line a gallery
silent, peaceful, until the combination of colours,
stairwells, and emotions
all windowless,
stir up a terrifying amount of room for reflection.



.../2

I spin, thrown against cold stone on a pottery wheel, ceramic
wall drawn to a close around me, a trapped vase to reach beyond my line of sight.
Feet sink in the soft base of muddy
water so full of silt it offers no
reflection if I look.

Schoolyard days, I used to
do everything. I lived to give. Everything.
But I fight to focus, those spun sides might surface anywhere now.

Flickering in the blue reflection cast by a screen,
a guilty gluttonous mix of media distraction.
Tonight, these knees do not need to lift
like there's some way we all can just rise, reinvented.
I listen instead for the oscillation of a machine to mill my whole mind:
Engineer me a solution!
Like a road-surfacing-remixer,
I need that asphalt-eating machine that grinds as it drives.
Carve, curb to curb,
every inch of my worn pavement and in tandem, spit me down,
roll me flat as a re-paved
concrete sidewalk solution.

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