

single mother on hastings

by Angela May

she left clues, memories, dots of inhabitation:
a man frozen at a cutting board, a woman hanging laundry,
a child at the inlet, collecting shiners,
all of them making home a speckled thing,
shaping city into light, stacked high, set adrift

she spun mischief into whereabouts,
and settled in for the journey, letting
the man, the woman, the child become themselves,
letting the city speak its volumes, which were soft but
stuck—the string section caught in arched-back g,
home as dough, éclair,
delicious in its warmth, in the mud
or chocolate
of tending

she spelled these thoughts with leftovers:
maze gohan, the little bodies of rice
turned dry and hard from the leaving,
mice scurrying at her feet, in the streetcar,
its course mapped and remapped to avoid the traffic
of spirits

she releases steam like a punk city
she is street
spinning stories, twisting words.
curated and bullshitless,
she beckons, sidelong in the current,
self undone, oxydized, woman as fresco.

the streetcar stops; and now exiting, she is set loose
coins to sewage, doubles drained, x's marked, bills split,
she has arrived, she who was destined to get
the dirt and deal with it, to become
dirty herself—so that when some unexpected freight
a celestial tug at the hem
looks up, open-mouthed,
releasing the truth about story
the child, in operatic lustre, uncanny and horrid and gaping and miraculous,

i now can live with a roommate ancestor,
in this city, up the stairs, down the hall, and in the middle on the left;
so that i now can prick my finger,
run it along the walls,
read the loom of the lion, learn
the infrastructure of lessons