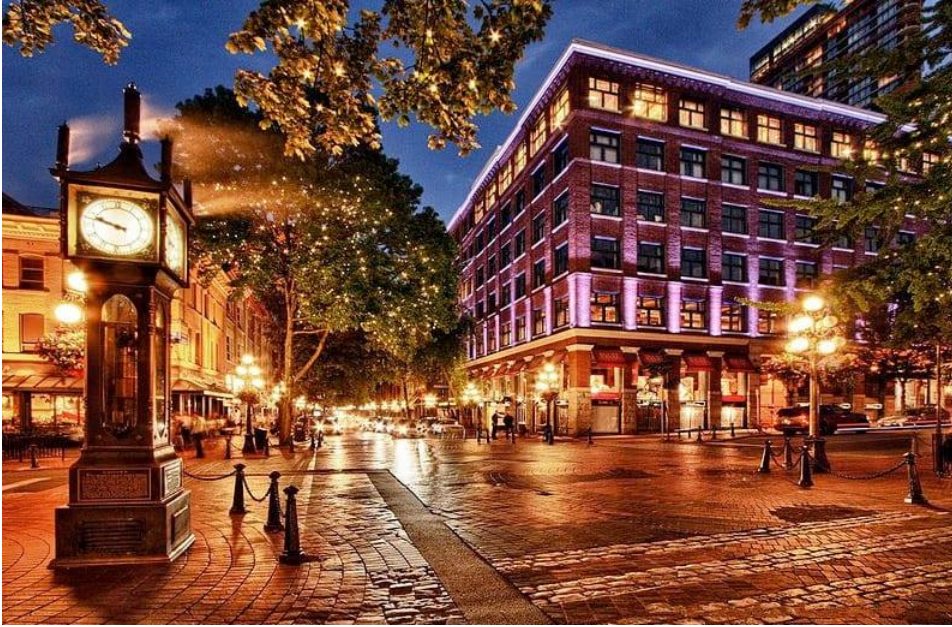


The Town Where Time Stops

by Alice Stanciu



Walking along the charming cobblestone streets

Arrays of old buildings exposed by brick display themselves-

Look at me! Look at me!

Reclaimed wood and details are strewn along the block

I'm caught in the moment, staring at the big old clock

Tick tock, tick tock

The hour strikes 6.

Bound by whistles, steam, and a playful little toon,

The sun starts to set, and the wind rushes around town

On such an Autumn day,

As I pass by the old maple tree,

Near Water and Carral Street

A warm crimson building stands,

Two stories high.

A quiet place yet still so full of life

I blink once,
Then again,
Processing the cast-iron windows,
Defined fascia boards,
And golden key stone trims
.... It must be Byrnes Block

A place once full of cedar and maple trees,
Went from being tread by the Cost Salish people,
To a town overcome by settlers.
Once burnt down in a tragic fire,
Then later rebuilt again.

And even so,
The place resisted through all the rights and wrongs,
And all the lefts and rights of history
From Granville to Vancouver,
Or the toppling of Gassy Jack
The place continues to be,
A symbol of perseverance and reconciliation.

Surrounded by spherical incandescent lamplights,
Night has taken its place,
And I realize where I stand.
A place where time holds its breath,
So warm and enchanted-
Glorious, Graceful, Gastown