

Unforgiving light

(from "Chicago diary: A lament in six parts")

Here was the place of my
undoing, the place
where she shattered to pieces
and spun into a tornado, a funnel of debris,
blind, belligerent, and begging for mercy.
Mercy I could not give.
There was the place I
played chess and drank coffee
for days and days
and days.
Here is a monument to fascism,
and there the martyrs' grave,
still waiting for the day
when silence will speak louder
than so many throttled voices.
Here, I hatched conspiracies
bold, beautiful, and childish,
and fell in love with waitresses
who never ceased
pouring the coffee.
There I lived in sorrow,
bewildered, with regret, the L
rattling the pane at the foot of my borrowed bed.
Here we made love, and there
we made love. And had sex
in these alleys, this parking lot, and
there on the rocks
where the waves crash
gently, with grace, with no apologies.
Here we danced and drank until the sun
rose yellow pink over the lake.
And there I lived alone, alongside mice and men
who beat their wives, in
unforgiving light.

New York
2009

Published in: *AfterHours: a journal of Chicago writing and art* #19 (Summer 2009)