



SANTEE FRAZIER

*Ritual of Sunrise*

Out on the shine off the street there is the reflection of the coming bustle of dawn, of plastic and bolted steel, neon and industry caught in the asphalt. And as the grass sweats—the groan of machinery echoing off masonry—the dust rises, sewing itself in the fat of trees, shining the faces of men in the ditch under hard hats, shoveling dirt, whose language rolls the tongue of digging. The clank and song are ancient, a music hidden away in the busting soil and rock. This almost ritual of sunrise, of shovel, and the gearing mechanisms of progress reminds me of the time I saw a man finger-painting a wall in unlaced high-tops. Smearing gold into brick. His face shined like gunmetal, and when I saw him suck the gold from the paper bag, I knew his ritual had something to do with time travel, with brick, before mineral, polygon, the invention of wheel, story of flat, firing of clay. And now making my way through this city whose streets are named by numbers and minerals—the sunlight breaking the haze of dust & exhaust—I realize the oldest thing in this city is drought.

