

## **Suburbanites Never Come Down Here**

**1.**

In the meantime, I'll keep looking.

**2.**

If I am a man who has fallen out of love, then love is what vibrates with emotions that refuse logic. I must be getting old. It doesn't feel like the same city, the same flesh, the same grave weight of time anymore. Where it's all headed, where I'm headed, I don't know. Gentrification, isolation, there won't be a working-class groove, a blue-collar factory-based living to be had. I once figured you either made the bombs or you dropped them. Now, I don't think so. Any sense of control I once trusted is long gone.

**3.**

The mills where I once worked loom empty now and rot each day along the river and I think most of modern industry is too squeaky clean in this city of blistered macadam best covered on foot. I walk past the concrete bumper-padded docks, and I think abandoned and splitting to Sister Detroit and Brother Toledo. What a low it feels like to call home a place outsiders denounce as the Rust Belt. Yet everybody, it seems, has got it bad in some way.

**4.**

The cracks full of dandelion weeds. Barred windows, low flat-roof skylights all far enough away from every mansion on the hill, so the abject can keep recycling cans and newspapers, plagued by bottled memories of job-days now over, and still the police locking them up for fun now and then. This part of the city feels robbed now of anything that once smacked of status, since all the suburbanites never

come down here, preferring to make their new-flock stinks elsewhere.

## 5.

It's like I'm standing at the bottom of a basin drained of nothing but effluvia that no one wants. I can find a parking space, but I can't find a grocery store or a coffee bar, not even an illegal Asian massage sauna, or a doughnut shop. Apparently, plenty of non-essentials are a sign of prosperity.

## 6.

What is the latest hip drug? What are Tivo and X-Box and Playstation? Do I even care? A train once passed through here. No more trains, but I can hear jets and the murmur of freeway traffic from all four points of the compass.

*John Michael Flynn*