

## The City of Umbrellas

### Lynsey Kamine

The sky spreads puddles of blackberry jam  
on the streets of the city of Umbrellas.  
Scooter pedals his two-seater bicycle,  
soaking up the rain in his Cosby sweater.  
Upstairs, Marie answers the telephone's ring,  
as an impatient whistle blows from the teapot.

A belly full of boiling water bubbles in the teapot,  
while wires carry Mother's newest blackberry jam  
recipe out of her Midwest kitchen. Marie's diamond ring  
yells "olly olly oxen free" to the missing man, to an umbrella  
stand. Her bare fingers tug on her goodnight sweater  
as memories wheel around her apartment like a bicycle:

Hand-drawn Valentines, delivered by her boy on his bicycle,  
in the middle of winter, when she was a little teapot --  
short and stout, bulging the seams of her sweater;  
another hand-me-down, spots stained with jam.  
Marie danced in the rain, holding her Valentine, as her umbrella  
slept on the stairs next to Papa's stale smoke ring.

*My dear Marie, a little rest will clear up those dark rings  
under your tired eyes.* Just as surely as a bicycle  
for two doesn't travel well without an umbrella  
to catch the rain and boil the drops in a teapot.  
Toby on the News @5 delivers the Traffic Jam  
Report to folks changing out of their sweaters.

Folks complain about their god damn sweaters,  
overworked and underpaid never pays the ring  
of bills always pouring in; fingers anxious to jam  
the numbers. Hands need held. Murky air begs for bicycles,  
while Marie's back burner only wants to hold a teapot,  
which is hard to come by in The City of Umbrellas.

Scooter bikes faster and faster. His umbrella  
lost back on Route 33, with his cardigan sweater  
that unraveled with the wind against the teapot's  
unanswered screams. Across from the ring  
around the rosies planted near the bicycle  
shop on 16<sup>th</sup> lay the cardigan left in the traffic jam.

Marie's umbrella sits next to her worn diamond ring.  
In her goodnight sweater, she sees a two-seater bicycle  
as her teapot cries and Mother calls for blackberry jam.