

John Meyers

Black Hole

Rotting plywood boards cover the windows of an abandoned building.
Wayward plastic grocery bags catch on a rusty fire escape and flutter in the wind.
A fifth floor window has lost its plywood shield in a recent fire,
revealing a charred black hole.
Every day thousands of cars pass the building,
their drivers see the black hole and think of nothing.

Roll back the years and children are running up and down the fire escape.
Their laughter reaches the room that will become the black hole.
Afternoon sunshine warms the room, lovely beams of dust-particle light
settle on the hardwood floor in golden pools.
A mother spoon-feeds an eager baby in a high chair.
A man calls from the next room, reminding his son
they must leave for the game or they'll be late.
The mother looks out the window,
squints into the sunshine and smiles.

In time this family is gone, replaced by a new family
whose members also live peaceful, comfortable lives
filled with experiences only they will know about.
The cycle repeats until the day sheets of plywood shut out the light.
The city has plans for the building but there are other priorities.
The black hole appears.

There is no record of events that occurred in and around this building.
Birthday parties, card games, family dinners, fireflies chased at twilight.
All of it gone.

Left behind is a crumbling structure thousands of cars pass each day.
This is a single empty building in a struggling city.
How many more are there in this city, in the world.
How many millions of moments and memories lost to time,
replaced by grim silence.