

Call It Leaves and Rain

I was walking through the middle of my life. Walking down Divisadero Street wearing old desert combat fatigues, listening to the antifreeze boil over. I was listening to the antifreeze boil over in conversations on the street, that dead end steaming hiss of radiators run a hundred thousand miles and more. The radiators boiled over in fatigue while I was walking a hundred thousand miles down Divisadero Street in Fresno, and it was July, and the asphalt was speaking its vapor, and I was wearing combat boots and walking through the middle of my life.

I was listening to WAR. I was listening to WAR on Divisadero Street and learning how to ride low through the rest of my life, learning how to walk the blocks in tighter and tighter circles, the way the lost do. In tighter and tighter circles I was lost in the WAR on Divisadero Street. I was circling the WAR the way vapor curls from the steaming hiss of dead radiators in Fresno. I was circling the lost in Fresno, wearing my combat boots worn down a hundred thousand miles and counting.

And I was counting. I counted each dying face passing by. I counted the birds with their exhausted voices. I counted the sentinel birds perched silent in the eucalyptus trees above. I circled the eucalyptus birds and listened for their medicine, the way the lost do in Fresno, wearing combat boots and speaking in vapor. I was circling through the middle of my life, right there under the medicine trees, listening to the silence of the sentinel birds and waiting for them to boil over in steam. But that's not what medicine birds do.

Medicine birds break open in orange and red. Medicine birds have eucalyptus leaves and bandage the air when they fly. Medicine birds fly through the windows in the head, imperious to glass. They impervious to WAR and hiss and steam and vapor and combat and the circling lost. Medicine birds fly through the windows to land in our beds when we're dreaming our circling dream of Divisadero and Fresno with its lost and circling WAR. Medicine birds have eucalyptus wings and when they land on our bed they transform into leaves and rain and lovers. The lovers in our beds are eucalyptus birds flying medicine through the windows in our heads. The lovers in our medicine beds fly eucalyptus through the circling loss. The lovers in our beds bring medicine to our lips and call it eucalyptus, call it love, call it leaves and rain for our exhausted souls.