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From my bedroom window I look at the taxis
One parked across the street is for sale
Its license plate reads RJ1220
To the left there’s a building under construction
Near the sky is a wooden platform used by workmen
to build the next storey
I wonder how many seconds there are between it and the street below

The last time I came here, I saw a family living under a viaduct
I rode a bus with six bags of belongings (they were of white plastic,
with a hanger jabbing a hole through one), and five people going somewhere
We passed the big statue of Christ which overlooks the entire city

I go to an open fruit market and watch a legless man who wears sandals
strapped to his trunk
He inches through the market, selling onions
Another man leans into my face and breathes a dirty breath smell
He asks for money which I don’t have for him
These types of men have questions for you always

I went to the beach this morning and I’m burned now
The dollar climbs daily and I’m still wondering how long
it would take to hit the cement below,
how long for this city to fall inconspicuously into the ocean
This tropical paradise with Winter pains that have no cures.

Ruth Hill