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Oak Street

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Oak Street

I sit on my front porch
and watch these Victorians
crumble around me. Wind
ripples the dog-eared pages of my book,
sends dandelion seeds whirling
into crabapple. Someone
has left an empty bottle
of gin at my stoop.

Clouds burn orange
behind power lines and a
brown tabby paces the
concrete between my house
and the next. Another car
hits the pothole down
the road and
rolls on.

A man with a clinking
black bag on his shoulder
stops by my stair. He asks
for a drink, or
a dollar. I can't tell
if his voice sounds
weary or hopeful. I can't
see the worn lines of his face.
The street lamps turn on and I tell him
I have nothing for him.
He walks away in the cold glow.

— Michelle Reed