

When I Lived in Paris

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When I lived in Paris, all I could think of was San Francisco,
driving Route 101 past Mission and Hyde

where a sign read *Saint Francis begged in the streets of Assisi*
and a homeless man crouched in the median.

His cigarette burned like Foxglove wild in the fields
and the rainbow tunnel carried me to Sausalito,

its endless pool and hairpin turns, the pungent Eucalyptus.
White cranes rose from the coast, calla lilies bloomed

and the mood-ring blue of a Stellar's Jay
flashed in my brain. But in Paris,

trees by the Seine were atomic bomb mushrooms on trunks
and I had to search for words like *grotto* and *glory*,

things I thought I remembered but couldn't define.
In Montemarte, I dreamed of chocolate and strawberries

but more often wanted to fast until I disappeared into another life,
the one I let go of the day I left San Francisco, feeling alone.

Or was it the shadow of the tombstone
I saw over Half Moon Bay, or the couple on the roadside

who seemed to be praying, or the woman selling fruit
in a valley of fog, everything silver, numinous,

except her basket of cherries?
Oh, how I wish I had tasted the red, delicious globes.