
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dan Curley: “Remuria”

Dan Curley · Wednesday, October 14th, 2020

I’m a sucker for a beautifully told tale, and Dan Curley’s “Remuria” delivers. This poem about his students and his friend and her devastating diagnosis, interwoven with Rome in all her beauty, kept pulling me back into its sad embrace.

— Alexis Rhone Fancher

Remuria

The day you were diagnosed
You came to my class and told

Stories of your Roman summer,
How you ascended the Aventine
Hill and looked out over the city

Beneath a canopy of stone pines,
The perfume of oranges honing

Your senses, making you alive
To the crunch of gravel tamped

Under heels of passersby, the cool
Comfort of the stone balustrade.
You made my students yours

And inspired nostalgia for somewhere
They had never been. Afterwards

I invited you for coffee. You said no,
Then changed your mind, and we
Whiled away the morning trading

Memories. The language barrier.

The triumphant meals. The work

Of immigrants in the tourist trade.
The awful squalor that somehow
Renders the beauty of the city

All the less bearable. I mentioned
Remuria, the settlement Remus

Would have made on the Aventine
Had he beaten Romulus to the punch.
Makes me wonder, you said, where

We'd be right now. You knew
The phone call was coming, yet

You sat with me, as though nothing
Were urgent. There would be time
For grief, and for rage at the doctor

Who dismissed you all those months,
Told you the bleeding was nothing.

The week after we landed, I sent
A photo of our students sheltering
Under the orange garden trees.

Remembering you from Remuria,
I wrote, not knowing what else to say.

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