

Suzy Harris

To the Empty Storefront on Belmont Street

Once you cradled giant metal tubs of milk,
milk that poured into glass bottles
sealed with crimped foil lids,
stacked on milk trucks,
delivered on porches like the morning paper.

Then, you sat bereft for years,
your brick façade a canvas for night-writers,
your sidewalks drifted with food wrappers
and shreds of newspapers.

Later, we watched your cement floors
polished to a shine, windows installed,
and you came to life again as a market,
flowers spilling out the front door,
the aisles smelling of dark-brewed coffee,
towers of oranges and bins of dark green
avocados, purple cabbages like round queens
next to spinach and glossy chard.

Now, peering through your closed blinds,
I tell you not to lose hope.
You are the sum of all you have been
and will be. The ghosts of old milk cans
hide in your rafters, and your cash registers
wait for new customers. Your time
will come again. It has to.