

Panoramic

By Jon Bishop

City buildings like gray and silver limbs, grasping at the blue above. The thing breathes, which you can hear in the morning, when it's cool and dark and there is not much traffic. Some might say it's a train or a few cars or a plane soaring ahead, on its way to landing. But those of us who have lived here forever know what it is. The dusty lungs of the city, taking in air. In, out. In, out. Two million people, living as one, an organism blotting out the natural landscape. Gritty, caked with age. Zoom out and you can see the full body. Spikes to the sky. An urban blob, always growing. I need to grow, it says to you, and you join it.

Then you are this: we are the two million, the metal, the pavement, the office buildings with late night lights. Come to us. Give yourself to the dark alleyways, the cracked sidewalks. Be a cell, a face with no mind that zooms to work, to eat, then back home.

Pull yourself out and just watch it all. Wake up in the morning, before first light, and listen to the breathing.