

Postcard from Berlin

forthcoming in the winter edition of *The Broken City*

When I saw the postcard from Berlin, Bruno, I knew
you hadn't perished, though you'd shed your wings,
no longer free from that tick-tocking of life's clock.

As an angel, you'd glided through monochromatic
streets, comforting the lost and lonely with your
presence, invisible except to children and the dying.

Then, after also seeing joy and wonder, you asked
God to be mortal, to embrace our sensual story—
experience soft kisses, pungent coffee, loud laughs.

But after casting off the bronze armor of immortality,
you'd learned the physical realm was overflowing
with other feelings and with danger—anger, sorrow,
unhappiness, bloodcurdling fear, aching loss, crime.

Perhaps—like Calypso—your earthbound lover
was a potent goddess, defying death and reviving
eternity, if you (unlike Odysseus) stuck around.

You relinquished heaven for our human circus;
is it better than your prior painless existence
in the sky? Are you happy, as the postcard says?

I found home. It has happened one time, and therefore forever.

(Bruno Ganz played an angel longing for mortality in Wim Wenders' film Wings of Desire.)