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Urban Renewal

Diane Funston

My old house still stands in Rochester.
Faded green shingles, peeling paint, city sunburn.
A street where no one walks anymore,
fear of drive-bys, young men on liquored corners,
empty youth hunting one another.
My old house weeps tar-papered tears
down disjointed gutters, dangling broken bones
Generations of domestic violence
weakening the century old wooden frame.

Once a 1920's wedding present,
newly built cottage, proud oak trim.
Hardwood floors, large butler pantry kitchen,
center of the home
during Depression days.

One window-eye without glass,
knocked out in a losing battle
with hard urban decay.
There's no gentrification
for our working-stiff neighborhoods.
Boarded up, abandoned,
left to lean into the earth.
But Spring still brings forth
great-grandma's grape hyacinths
on an overcast April day
in center city Rochester.

Diane Funston lives in Marysville, California, outside of Sacramento. Diane has been published in various journals and anthologies including California Quarterly, Cabbages and Kings, GUTS, San Diego Poetry Annual, Snapdragon, Whirlwind, Sharp Piece of Awesome, Lift It Up, Summation, and Palettes and Quills, among others. Diane is the founder of a weekly poetry group that has been meeting in Tehachapi CA since 2001. She also co-founded a women's poetry group during her six years in San Diego County. She has recently been appointed as the Poet-in-Residence for Yuba-Sutter Arts and Culture and runs a virtual monthly poetry event.