

**To the Otter Who Snuck into the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden and Ate the Koi**  
by Kelsey Andrews

I'm told there are pictures of you on Facebook  
scuttering through Chinatown like a long rat,  
tourists happy to see a little nature.

I don't have a phone for Facebook  
and I never saw you as I ghosted  
those same streets, invisible.

On stony beaches  
where rich people are housed,  
otters live under docks and smell terrible,  
musk and rotting fish.  
I wonder, do they roll in the mess like dogs,  
silver spangles adhering to their fur?

In the Garden, your concrete-bruised  
paws were soothed by moss and mud.  
All those koi caged in a stream  
that didn't go anywhere.

I too was feral  
but am caged now in luxury,  
an SRO inspected periodically  
for bedbugs.

The Park Board tried to catch you  
but you winkled the fish  
from their live traps  
and laughed at them,  
while I must be polite to the social worker  
who scrunches up her nose  
when I get too near.

Buttons sold to the crowd  
were printed "Team Otter" or "Team Koi".  
One you ate was fifty.

You tore the liver, the fatty bits  
from the bright stomach,  
left the rest.

Meanwhile they're trying to tame me,  
medicate me well  
enough to get some kind of job,  
stop winking money from Disability.

You disappeared one day.  
No one saw you leave.

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