

**Jessica Austin**

## With Time

Early Sunday morning, alarms yet to blare.  
She stretches her limbs, eager,  
And we run through Rock Creek Park.  
Alone, together, like the city was made for us.

They say she is only beautiful when she stands still,  
But I love the way she moves, carving creeks  
Through the capital, winding her way downhill  
Without concern for borders or efficiency.

She passes in a society that doesn't want her,  
That invents sophisticated tools to clock her.  
She shrinks, she disappears,  
And she dilates, too, if you must ask,  
Opening herself up  
In moments of beauty and pain alike.  
As much a relic of her past  
As a reminder not to brace for what's to come,  
Allowing herself to be filled.

They say she waits for no man,  
But she waits for me.  
She slows down, walks when she needs to,  
Doesn't beat her body into submission.  
I try to take pleasure in her rhythm.  
Every breath, every step,  
Watching her unfold in front of me,  
Remembering how tangible she is.

The sun creeps up the sky  
As the sweat trickles down my skin.  
My water bottle lightens  
As my legs fatigue.  
The city is on a schedule now,  
But we don't have a bus to catch.

They say relationships take work, and if I'm honest,  
I used to fight with her, ignore her, beg her to pass.  
But running through the creeks, the trees, the seasons,  
I will learn to love her.