Big City Speech

By W. S. Di Piero

Use me
Abuse me
   Turn wheels of fire
   on manhole hotheads

Sing me
Sour me
   Secrete dark matter’s sheen
   on our smarting skin

Rise and shine
In puddle shallows
   under every Meryl Cheryl Caleb Syd
   somnambulists and sleepyheads

Wake us
Speak to us
   Bless what you’ve nurtured in your pits
   the rats voles roaches and all outlivers
   of your obscene ethic and politics

Crawl on us
Fall on us
   you elevations that break and vein
   down to sulfuric fiber-optic wrecks
   through drill-bit dirt to bedrock

Beat our brows
Flee our sorrows

   Sleep tight with your ultraviolets
   righteous mica and drainage seeps
   your gorgeous color-chart container ships
   and cab-top numbers squinting in the mist

Source: Poetry (June 2009)
W. S. Di Piero was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and received his bachelor’s degree from St. Joseph’s College and his master’s degree from San Francisco State College. He has also had a long teaching career at such universities as Louisiana State University, Northwestern University, and Stanford University, where he still teaches. Di Piero was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2001. He often writes about growing up in his neighborhood of South Philadelphia, and the Italian-American working class families who largely populated the area.

See More By This Poet