

Chord

By Stuart Dybek

A man steps out of sunlight,
sunlight that streams like grace,

still gaping at blue sky
staked across the emptiness of space,

into a history where shadows
assume a human face.

A man slips into silence
that began as a cry,

still trailing music
although reduced to the sigh

of an accordion
as it folds into its case.

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Source: *Streets in Their Own Ink* (2004)



Stuart Dybek is a masterful short story writer as well as poet. The qualities that distinguish his fiction—a strong connection to place, particularly his native Chicago, childhood nostalgia tinged with irony, a meandering narrative pace, and an ability to find beauty amid urban blight—also characterize much of his poetry. Few writers have captured street life as movingly as Dybek. The son of a Polish immigrant, he has published two critically acclaimed books of short stories, *The Coast of Chicago and Childhood and Other Neighborhoods*, as well as a collection of linked stories: *I Sailed with Magellan*. He teaches at Western Michigan University and lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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