Windy City

By Stuart Dybek

The garments worn in flying dreams
   were fashioned there—
     overcoats that swooped like kites,
   scarves streaming like vapor trails,
     gowns ballooning into spinnakers.

In a city like that one might sail
   through life led by a runaway hat.
     The young scattered in whatever directions
   their wild hair pointed, and gusting
     into one another, fell in love.

At night, wind rippled saxophones
   that hung like windchimes in pawnshop
     windows, hooting through each horn
   so that the streets seemed haunted
     not by nighthawks, but by doves.

Pinwheels whirled from steeples
   in place of crosses. At the pinnacles
     of public buildings, snagged underclothes—
   the only flag—flapped majestically.
     And when it came time to disappear

one simply chose a thoroughfare
   devoid of memories, raised a collar,
     and turned his back on the wind.
   I closed my eyes and stepped
     into a swirl of scuttling leaves.

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