Interlude in Trader Joe's Parking Lot

by Joanne Jagoda

A man playing a sax sits on a makeshift stool in Trader Joe's parking lot,

scrounging for his three kids his sad story splayed on tattered cardboard,

his reedy notes a brass confession soulful, plaintive,

squandered in this shitty parking lot with the bouquet of urine drifting in from dark corners.

I'm pulled in by the music like a rogue wave, and he has no idea I'm drowning in long-forgotten memories...

Two kids under the spell of young love, slow dancing under swaying palms, rum and cokes with paper umbrellas a pony-tailed sax player spewing pure honey.

I'm still clutching my cart, loaded with organic what-evers lost in sweet reverie.

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I give him a few dollars, carefully placed in his open case. He nods, I quietly clap in this ersatz concert hall.

Don't stop playing sax man, take me with you somewhere, anywhere, to when the promise of our young lives was still dancing in front of us.