

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-ers
lost in sweet reverie.

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.

