

I Woke Up In My City

I woke up in my city and heard a winter sparrow singing
in a tree's courtroom like a passionate lawyer proclaiming
today's innocence, today's alibi. We live, your Honour,

in forgetful times. The old horrors continue to horrify.
Our usual injuries will injure us again, the pin repeats
itself to a popped balloon, the ashes cherish their fire.

Yet evidence suggests a bouquet of flowers can't tell
if the occasion is for sorrow or congratulations,
and the world's hidden radiance slips through us

like a hand searching for its sleeve. Happiness,
can you account for your whereabouts?
Joy, explain the event in your own words.

The morning light is sworn in as a witness.
The sparrow sings on and on without end.
The defense never rests.

Jason Heroux, Poet Laureate, City of Kingston
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