

The Sun Visits a Farmers' Market in Northern California

Their voices weaving purple shadows, children
are running around the traffic barriers. Strawberries,
loose & in boxes, a market-stall of tulips bundled
& tipped by fire, local artichokes stacked two-for-a-dollar,
Solano Avenue is closed below San Pablo.

& you, my exclamation point, my little grief,
let's you & me stroll among the produce
where tastes of supper are sold for the mere tap-tap
& pause of our passing. Look: the late sun
has slipped under us & grasped then floated out

our shadows, like throw-rugs shook become flags
or undone bandages. Soon enough, my black
leaves, night-softened underfoot, our passage
will go quiet, quiet as the great, travelling clouds.
So much before us, so much time before us & ours

so little, so afflicted, but the Renaissance will keep us alive:
late strawberries overflowing their paper cartons, blunt
loaves glowing a soft bronze, the crumpled bibs of lettuce
& purple kale, the faces of the vendors & of the crowd.
The sun's insistent hands are seeking each bleak thing.

by Christina Hutchins