

## THIS CITY

It's in me, the core of me, this city with its dearth of trees, surfeit of fences;  
this city of clenched keys ready for an attacker's eye; this city framed  
with murals, gargoyles; where acrobats, string quartets perform to make a buck.  
This city of dollar pizza, saffron, curry, good humor men in ding-dong carts  
and bad humor men in alleys; this city with the subway cop  
who asked for a fuck when I was 14, where dancers groove to *All Night Long*.  
This city of long lines, of people drinking wine on park blankets  
listening to Shakespeare, to John playing here, singing *Imagine*  
in this city of strawberry fields miles from unpolluted fruit.  
This city, where each yard no bigger than a sidewalk slab  
has a fig tree taller than the top of its fence. This city of layers  
that leaves me unraveled, rewrapped, unraveled again; this city of rappers  
where I met the love of my life in a tangle of run-down poets  
in a run-down tenement with no windows; this city of chandeliered pretensions  
operatic tragedy, smiling bridges arcing false promises across the waters that separate us.  
This city that separates me from who I am; this city that is who I am,  
seductive as a belly dancer's ripple, begging for love like a misbehaving spouse;  
this city, waiting for the rising river to lap its avenues and cover the concrete with its kiss.

by D Dina Friedman



Andrei Kushnir, New York, from Central Park