

Jeannine Bardo

Light

He carries with him bone and ash

When I first saw him he was all light

    Illuminated from within

        Eyes kindling

        A light he still possesses only to fade when he is sick

Our fate was a series of events

    He was not part of the plan

I stepped away in order to see more clearly

    He let me go with no burden of guilt

        He, suffering but never bitter

        Me, mourning the future not to be

Our return to a life together found us both altered

My husband of twenty one years

The scars of his profession remain

    He became a vessel that day

        That devastating day that crushed the heart and steel of this city

        A vessel to carry the microcosms of destruction

It was the first time I ever feared for him

    The first time I couldn't sense *him*, only emptiness

And so I fear now

    That what he carries will steal the precious light from his eyes too soon

He is haunted by the same unspoken fears

    But the smoke and ash he inhales now is voluntary

        A demented defense

        To fight what may be raging

        Fighting fire with fire

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