

## Gold Dust

The last time I felt truly contented, because you asked, was several years back. I was waiting to interview an aging photographer and I stood outside a bolted front gate, hung between rust-stained concrete walls, as he fussed with the remote switch. The sky was totally still, glowing, and hung with the scent of burning tires. There was a flowering tree in the front yard, and it interrupted the heavy air some, tried to hold it at bay. I turned my back for a moment to inspect the street, to let the smoke and sun wrap around my face. You told me that I babble when I'm nervous, that I use unmoored gerundive phrases: *being here now, doing this because, thinking about deeply*. I stood on the curb, turned back around, waited as the gate slowly pulled open.

Inside his shady office, tile floors with stucco walls, the photographer pointed to a large chest-high safe. His negatives were inside; a life insurance policy. "My subjects thought I was a commie Jew", he reminisced. "I was".

Outside the city he would borrow a friend's slick Chevrolet pick-up, had a tufted beard, wore horn-rimmed spectacles.

I carried with me a small cloth bag and a flip phone, and I wrote his memories down in a soft purple notebook.

Now, looking back at these notes, I realize I wrote his premonitions in my own words.

That morning was ladies swim at the city pool. The lifeguards had hung a large grey curtain in front of the entry gate for privacy, even though the pool is outdoors. Before lessons began, the pool staff opened the giant waterslide for the members of the adult swim class. Those women in their baggy swim clothes sprinted up the stairs to the slide's hollow entrance then bowled along the blue fiberglass sluice. Their hoots and shouts could be heard over the gate, though I'm not sure, I was already in the pool's velvety deep-end, my ears filled up by the muted rhythm of water. Blue rippled in the heavy sun, dust and pollen started to gather on the surface.