

## Clay Waters

### Big Empty

My memory is a virus,  
emptying the streets  
of my beautiful ruin:  
churches cleaned of belief  
monuments to heroes, safely deceased  
palimpsests scrubbed of significance.

Knowing which side streets  
hold the longest shadows  
I walk with immunity,  
post-pandemic,  
all fevers tamed for good  
escaped from the grasp of others  
on invisible crutches.

only, at certain turns,  
a subterranean breach  
is betrayed by a breeze,  
conjuring that redolence,  
imperfectly suppressed,  
that sends me to my knees.

**Clay Waters** poems have been published in *The Santa Clara Review*, *River Oak Review*, *Literal Latte*, *Roanoke Review*, and *Poet Lore*. He lives near Orlando, FL.