

## Jeff Santosuosso

### The Promise

Numerous like *Monopoly* streets  
cheap to ritzy ridden  
old Atlantic City before the decline,  
air conditioning, southern expansion,  
tax rates, labor costs, land of opportunity.

Busted windows, busted doors, busted lives,  
colorful names, now thoroughfares of decay,  
bent chain link, broken windows, strange smells from inside  
gunshot outside  
a block from the brightness astronauts can see.

My life of free parking, orange and yellow cards  
like Ouija and tarot,  
my mind too far to see the places boarded up  
on our game table, in their 'hood  
money in color, pink cash!  
if you lose, you just fold up the board,  
put away the pieces.

Your life not in pieces,  
race car miniatures, top hats, shaggy dogs,  
not needles, caps, illicit trysts in the alleys.  
get out of jail free, fantasy for Boy Scouts  
elusory for the petty, the wayward, the truly lost  
lighting up by the boardwalk, no coat against the cold,  
the Atlantic spraying salt in the wounds.

We could play again whenever we wanted,  
family game night, not gaming,  
no dealing from the deck's bottom,  
love from the bottom of our hearts.

**Jeff Santosuosso** is a business consultant and award-winning poet living in Pensacola, FL. His chap book, *Body of Water*, is available through Clare Songbirds Publishing House. He is Editor-in-Chief of *panoplyzine.com*, an online journal of poetry and short prose. Jeff's work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and has appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *The Blue Nib*, *Mojave River Review*, *The Lake (UK)*, *Red Fez*, *Texas Poetry Calendar*, *Avocet*, *Pif*, and other online and print publications.