

Michael Minassian

Playing Detective

After leaving your apartment,
tired of playing detective,
I went to a fortune teller;
she read my palm,
then the soles of my feet—
keep walking, she said.

The suitcase you left
in my driveway was empty;
another false clue.

Some things disappeared;
rain started and stopped
like a reluctant lover.

Words sprang
like fat weeds
with nowhere to go.

When I woke up
alone in the morning
I could see chalk marks
on the sheets of the bed:
an outline where whatever
separated our silences began.

Mrs. Got Rocks

A child of the depression,
my mother held a tight grip
on her money and purse,
running a frugal household.

Who am I? Mrs. Got Rocks?
she used to say.

Leaving me to wonder
who she was talking about.

Easier to understand

when she said *money*

didn't grow on trees,
or you can't squeeze

blood out of a stone,
pointing to my father.

Never blushing
when she dropped

small coins in the brass
collection plate

the church has more
money than God,

another of her favorite
expressions I puzzled over,

wondering what the deity
would do with so much cash.

Michael Minassian's poems and short stories have appeared recently in such journals as *Live Encounters*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, and *Chiron Review*. He is also a Contributing Editor for *Verse-Virtual*, an online magazine. His chapbooks include poetry: *The Arboriculturist* and photography: *Around the Bend*. His poetry collections *Time is Not a River* and *Morning Calm* are both available on Amazon. Minassian's poetry manuscript *A Matter of Timing* won the 2020 Poetry Society of Texas' Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Contest (publication: Summer 2021). For more information: <https://michaelminassian.com>