

Robbie Gamble

Injured Rat, Screaming People

sounds like the title of a low-budget chopsocky flick if it had been shot here in my suburban home town and I can imagine a climactic battle sequence spilling through the shops and kiosks of the Coolidge Corner Arcade masked swordsmen weapons drawn slashing through racks of tagged clothing awaiting repair in The Zipper Hospital or slo-mo clips of broth and noodles arcing through the air as warriors spin and clank and stab their way across the packed Ganko Ittetsu Ramen shop while panicked patrons scurry out of Katrina Mattei Jewelers and Good Vibrations leaving a clatter of broken chunky earrings and day-glo sex toys strewn across a bloodied arcade tile floor quite a compelling scene but in fact this title is the headline for the weekly Brookline police blotter column where I learn that my neighbors care enough to inform the police about a wounded rodent in the gutter or that sometimes in anguish someone bellows devotional hymns through a megaphone in front of a synagogue at an hour when most of us want to sleep not quite so cinematic as a martial blood ballet but sufficiently dramatic that the police will come out and render assistance with the same care that a director like Ang Lee might take to execute a multi-angled stunt scene and imagining these odd encounters is good for a morning chuckle over coffee and toast but what if next time that anguished resident shows up wielding something deadlier than a megaphone

Robbie Gamble's poems have appeared in *Coal Hill Review*, *Cutthroat*, *RHINO* and *Rust + Moth*. He was the winner of the 2017 *Carve* Poetry prize. He divides his time between Boston and Vermont.