Valentown, A Ghosttown Hall

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"You've been reading Dostoevsky again."

She grinned at me. "But active love is labor and fortitude. I think it's absolutely lovely."

"It's subversive, is what it is. I've a good mind to lock you in the closet and not let you out."

"Don't be angry with me." She said, "If you do, I'll cry; I do anyhow, sometimes, because I know I make you unhappy. But I do love you." She threw her arms about me, dug in her nails and began to sob softly.

"I appreciate that, I really do, but please stop crying. You're clawing my spine all to shreds. Besides you'll be late for the procession if you don't hurry." I slapped her on the posterior, and led her towards the door. "I'll see you to the car." I threw her coat over her shoulders. "I don't suppose they'll mind if you wear this until the demonstration begins. Now go and picket to your heart's content."

She got into the car, threw me a kiss and roared off. When I was no longer governor, I'd have a terrible time keeping up with her traffic tickets. I turned up the steps and walked back to the library. I took her copy of Crime and Punishment from the shelves and took the elevator to the bomb shelter.

Valentown, A Ghosttown Hall

(Dedicated to J. Sheldon Fisher, who saved and restored this 1869 Shopping Plaza for future generations)

Near Exit 45 that takes you woosh! straight east or west, ghost Valentown waits, a gaunt height of timber walls, panes stretched to weathered frames, staring blankly into the wind.

Its wood once unseasoned with the greenness of hope, a springtime community exulted in its young earthdays. Now it looms a strange thing, cast up from the sea of time on our sands of steel and glass.

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"Valentine's folly!", built to meet a railroad that got lost somewhere. Here had been the dream, then the wreck of the promised end. But like an aged Lear alone on the heath, it howled down fate and chance, shook off the bony hand of Nothing, to stand now, a door to the past:

like a human, an achieved Something.

REV. L. HETZLER

Jewel in a junkyard,
you are
Abnormal against nauseating normality,
you walk
Naked among masqueraders,
you give
Icicles to desert dwellers,
you light
Candles for the blind,
you are
Exploder of their graves

You are
Autumn's rainbow
bursting
windblown
bouquet
disrupting
a
cold
gray
day

Rick Taddeo