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Living in the Apocalypse (5)

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MEG BARBOZA

LIVING IN THE APOCALYPSE (5)

Subtraction, Truth
Corn Hill, Rochester, NY, early autumn

"Even though it seems like adding... poetry is subtracting."
—Li-Young Lee

I go downtown
between Main and Court
to see the poet

of silence. He speaks
of apocalypse—this mode of uncovering—
our duty as artists.

I concede,
taking the wrong turn
home.

In the midst of this war
I get lost in Corn Hill, an early
part of this city. I have

no idea where I am, no way
to find East Avenue
again, lost in neighborhoods

which exist only because
I’ve gotten lost in them.
I concede, Li-Young, I agree

wholeheartedly. Here, somewhere
in the belly of Fitshugh, I know
you are right. This is the point:

the peeling away, layers
like delicate, sunburned skin
Each shaving wrinkling

beneath my hard hands, my fingers
burning with touch.
The excavation

of what is presumed
lost, missing, dead.