

Two Poems · *Peter Marcus*

RODIN EXHIBIT ON THE ROOFTOP,  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Caryatid fallen with urn, fallen  
with stone. In ancient Greece these women  
were motionless columns upholding the roof,  
sheltering the world. Above Central Park  
set free in morning light they trudge  
one step per century toward the blockish skyline.  
Near midtown, Atlas upholds the earth  
as my father held me above his head  
before placing me on his shoulders.  
He must have placed me there  
knowing his eyes soon would close  
and I would become his periscope.

From the rooftop of the Metropolitan Museum  
I was hoping to glimpse St. John  
the Divine: saints in their tomb-size  
alcoves, posed rigidly in gestures  
of certainty and knowledge. No women up there  
like these burdened with the stones  
and water of their fates. And the burghers  
do not seem to need anyone: welded together  
and surrounded by luscious nudes, backs arched,  
breasts bronze and firm. Caryatid, at least  
you were blessed with a name like those  
of birds—small quick yellow fluttering.