Sidewalk Chalk
C.J. Creley

Below the city, lies a city, powdery smooth, rendered in chalk. The blended sky glints softly with windows. They are blurred, a mere dream at early twilight. The sun wanes, both here and there. Buildings dim, appearing insubstantial against the blue warmth of a late summer sky. Yesterday, this was the moment the city spilled from the artist’s mind. On the grit canvas, her name is all but faded, identity and art blended together. But if I lean close enough, I may see her fingerprints pressed into the concrete. She smoothed the smoky colors tenderly, letting them cling to the rough surface and her. When she washed her hands, particles of sunlight and skyscraper poured down her sink. I wonder if she too wished to catch them in a camera, protect the threads of color as an assurance that not everything must fade. I drink the image in, before the rain does. Yet part of me wants to leap into it, like the child stomping on the chalk portraits nearby. Pastel clouds smudging our socks, we will sprinkle art across the city on our sneakers until all that remains is soft dust in memory.