

Living in A City Already Bombed

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Mary Wildwood

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For us, here in inner-city Detroit, the crumbling of a “progress-oriented society” is very real and present. Its evidence—ragged empty shells of concrete-lined streets leading to their untimely ends, amputated by expressways or isolated corporate megaliths, the occasional pathetic charades of well-being, the razed and desolate spaces—pervades everything we do, even attempts to distract ourselves from the ruin. Everyone living here is profoundly aware of the failure. It is bred in our bones, as during our lives we’ve witnessed not just this city’s demise, but the cumulative result of misdeeds performed throughout history by an increasingly urban society impelled by a limitless want of power brought to self-destruction.

Visually and psychologically, this is a city already bombed. Any sense of place or community it had or has to offer has been and is being destroyed on a continuing basis. The communities that grew in Detroit did so despite the nature of its development and expansion, not because of it. But the fact that the destruction we are seeing is something akin to Error eating her children, only makes the process more horrible.

I believe that urban and rural environments, as they remain separate but thriving and interactive, reflect dual complimentary aspects of the human personality in balance.

After all, that voracious urban mentality does not end with the encroaching limits of the city. It requires individual awareness and conviction translated into a turning away from participation in the subtle and pervasive demands of “progress” complemented by the strengthening of our personal relationships and an exercising of creativity in this “transitional city,” and all cities, for the healing, restorative solution to become more than abstract.

fifth Estate

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