

POETRY

# Exiles

by A.D. Capili



"The City and a Dream" by Anna Kirby

You remind me the blind in the bedroom is broken: I need to call  
somebody  
    in Dutch, which already makes my thinking stutter;  
the cat peed again outside the litter, you added,  
    which brought to mind the vet we can't afford.  
Remember it's Sunday. Call your son. Make the effort to talk —  
    but we forget — for death phoned another aunt of yours  
    as you were gasping for more air in spring.

Most of our days have become like this: we make lists  
    of chores that now form the substance of our being.

We hear of things that happen in our motherlands,  
    without us, and we can do nothing but eat our self-pity.

We've asked ourselves if we're creatures that chase the fishing cord and bait  
    but never see the hand that pulls and swings — are we to share the fate  
    of Moses, a stranger to both birthplace and promised land?

Yet there are also days when you return home feeling supernatural  
    for having spoken a string of Dutch at the pharmacy. Then we'd sit  
    at home marvelling at the refuge we've scraped together:  
    the *tweedehands*<sup>[1]</sup> furniture and books, the snakeplants,  
    the adopted pets  
    — for now this is it. This is life. *C'est à nous*.

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[1] secondhand