

*Chris Crittenden*

**Fugitives From The Urban**

hurt we are,  
troublesome,  
our guilt like dirty steak knives  
that slew sacred cows.

unseen we are,  
like a battle on Andromeda,  
mischievous in nooks  
of faint masoleums.

no preacher freed us,  
no Sappho or Sartre,  
no Buddha like a gong  
rippling our revival—

no crucifix,  
no lysergic diethylamide,  
no death or exodus  
or creed—

we just saw.  
exhumed ourselves,  
swept off the roots  
of skyscrapers  
and cellphones,

washed off the dirt  
of What-Must.  
we looked at a world  
beyond stress-chewed faces

and saw it was good.

**Ice Leaves Road**

water neath white,  
slow as a quilt  
of seeping snakes,

long lungs of liquid  
breathing earth  
below fading ribs.

rivulets carve combs,  
berths wilder  
than the rhymes

of Daedalus,

agile  
as the metamorphosis  
of mist, sculpting  
free,

arch and chrysalis,  
florid tracery  
that fades, swallowed  
in gleams—

doomed columns,  
pebbles for plinths,  
so many brief exotic

parthenons.

**Deadly Nightshade**

stigmas of shadow  
shift like barbed ivy  
over his gait,

crooked as the claws  
of damned lobsters  
that exist only

when suggested  
by the curl  
of withering plants.

odd the patterns  
contorting across him,  
fey pantomimes

unearthed from crypts  
between his ribs,  
where the heart

defecated  
what it couldn't take.

odd  
the surreptitiousness—  
no feel taste touch smell sound,

no sign language  
or whisked semaphore;  
and yet the shadows hurt

like rose claws  
vining on a wreck  
of composure.