

A City Without Horses

Show me the ones who can imagine
a hundred-thousand moons from now
a city on this prairie of Big Bluestem grass
purple coneflower, bird and wasp
forged between these two rivers
built of crushed rock and black tar
soft clay fired to a million red bricks
buttermilk churned to white cream.

Show me the ones who can see
factories filled with steel horses
thirty-three machines in rows
pulsing with rod and piston
filled with wingless men and women
breaking hard against earth's bounds
of wind
gravity
torque.

Show me the ones who can hear
the scream of engine and crowd
the smell of rubber and gasoline
chequered flags
ones who ride faster than the fastest braves
of the Miami and the Lenape
striving to become more than mortal
striving to live forever
in this fabled city without horses

and I shall call them victors.

—Mike Murphy, Baltimore, MD

From the author: *The Indianapolis 500 is an American icon, both the race itself and the place, and symbolizes the striving and friendly competition of men and women to go farther and faster, something that, along with concepts of 'victory', while universal and unchanged since ancient times, can also be viewed differently depending on one's perspective. The title comes from the original Speedway developer's vision of '...a city without horses.'*

Mike Murphy is a writer and poet who once raced a canary yellow 1970 Volvo 1800 through the streets of small Appalachian towns, dreaming he was Mario Andretti. He now lives in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife Stacie and two cats named Daisy and Zelda.