

# The White Room

*for Birgit and Luis*

A Bohemian bomb shelter:  
Sparkling. Hard. Open.  
A room so white,  
there's enough paint  
to hold it up like glue.  
Black aged doors dim the bright brick walls  
of this stale stall, revived  
with color displayed  
under a dazzling cascade of tiny stars  
and a disco ball moon  
in an undulating wave.

The cold cement floors are a map of its history.  
They ring with the sounds of music,  
of moving furniture,  
of murmuring voices unseen  
and footsteps overhead.

Its timbers, aged factorily,  
once shouldered an entire mill  
but now provide shelter  
to those who dwell best in silence.  
The strong columns support the ceiling and the world.  
If the roof leaks, this gallery  
will be the last to know.

Wise, ready,  
solid and mutable,  
new and distressed,  
some kind of balance:  
this glorious lack of symmetry  
is just where it should be.

Staying here is not hard.  
Bring to us refuge  
where we can wear flowers in our hair  
and dream of poetic things.

*A collaborative poem written by Robin Boucher, Tony Brown, Gwyneth Campbell, Jeff Campbell, Logan Cohen, Tarique Cooper, Gennifer Dorgan, Tom Ewart, Kate Gregoire, Judith Hoyer, Adjael Meija, Catherine Mullaney, William Sowka, Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, Cathy Taylor, and Jill Watts at a Mapping Worcester in Poetry workshop in The White Room, Crompton Building, October 16, 2022.*