

# São Paulo

*Elizabeth Terhorst*

I can never go back to São Paulo.

Steam floated off  
of our shoes melt-  
ing into tarmac,  
and the warmth of  
your mixed drink crept  
up your face in  
a novice hue.

Across the way,  
our eyes always  
met more than our  
hands. But, I follow-  
ed you down to  
the streets, the  
shops, your house.

The music cleansed  
the windows similar  
to how your laughter  
washed over my senses  
and pulled me in  
hook,  
line,  
and sinker.

Under sonic waves and humid air,  
I was ensnared in your gaze  
and  
in your arms.

But, the walls of your home were painted  
with words still foreign to me despite  
the language we molded out of late nights  
and

reserved smiles in-front of the  
prying public. I wanted to tell you  
I love you in every language—  
native or not.

After hearing the chimes  
of promises you made  
to all those placed  
before me through  
our patched up walls,

all I wanted  
was your cold fingers  
to peel off  
my bloodstained shirt  
and wash over the claw marks  
you carved into the left side  
of my chest,

but the only apology you gave me  
was knuckles brushing  
against the bruises blooming over  
the back of mine.

You couldn't speak in a way  
I can understand because  
there is more than my tone  
deafness standing between us  
at the end of the night.

I walked out of the house  
and into the street.  
The gravel underfoot was  
beaten to dust and dirt  
by the weight of everyone  
else who walked away.

And, I knew  
this would be the last time  
I'd hear the music; the steel drum  
of your heart beating alongside mine,

