

**The path to the Milky Way leads through Los Angeles
by Jo Harjo**

There are strangers above me, below me and all around me and we are
all
strange in this place of recent invention.

This city named for angels appears naked and stripped of anything
resembling
the shaking of turtle shells, the songs of human voices on a summer
night
outside Okmulgee.

Yet it's perpetually summer here, and beautiful. The shimmer of gods is
easier
to perceive at sunrise or dusk,
when those who remember us here in the illusion of the marketplace
turn toward the changing of the sun and say our names.

We matter to somebody,
We must matter to the strange god who imagines us as we revolve
together in
the dark sky on the path to the Milky Way.

We can't easily see that starry road from the perspective of the crossing
of
boulevards, can't hear it in the whine of civilization or taste the
minerals of
planets in hamburgers.

But we can buy a map here of the stars' homes, dial a tone for
dangerous love,
choose from several brands of water or a hiss of oxygen for gentle
rejuvenation.

Everyone knows you can't buy love but you can still sell your soul for
less
than a song to a stranger who will sell it to someone else for a profit
until you're owned by a company of strangers.

in the city of the strange and getting stranger.
I'd rather understand how to sing from a crow
who was never good at singing or much of anything
but finding gold in the trash of humans.
So what are we doing here I ask the crow parading on the ledge of
falling that
hangs over this precarious city?
Crow just laughs and says wait , wait and see and I am waiting and not
seeing
anything, not just yet.
But like crow I collect the shine of anything beautiful I can find.