



## Cities

They crossed over prairies and into the beating hearts of cities,  
searching for belonging among the scrawled art of cities.

For years, they've watched ships from a distance,  
waiting for the tide, for the blooming fig trees of cities.

They stood on the threshold between their world and ours,  
looking for a sign among the stars twinkling above cities.

They're descended from warriors and freedom fighters,  
smoke-choked shores and the burning of cities.

Please be kind to the wanderers  
taking cover under the umbrella of cities,

they're just like you and me  
with skyscraper hearts, born of cities.

Now is the season of giving pocket-sized kindness,  
anything you can spare for the preservation of cities.

Show them the hole-in-the-walls, the B-train,  
the light promised in liberty's torch, all the love of cities.

The streets painted red, green, and white  
the invisible made visible under the lights of cities.

If the endless well of wonder and magic within these limits runs dry,  
let there be mourning of cities.

For there is no greater blessing to the world  
than the hope bubbling up from the cracked sidewalks of cities,  
that gives them and a little girl named  
Elani a reason to carry on— thank you, cities.



## 2024 Roanoke Youth Poet Laureate **ELANI SPENCER**

Presented at the February 20, 2024 *It's Here Gallery Talk*  
alongside Becky Carr's *Ukrainian Mother and Child*, 2023,  
Stoneware tinted with mason stains, 14"