

Susan Eastman

Oakland

1. woman & dog:

She engaged me, sharing memories of another life when it *didn't use to be like this*. As she spoke, she stretched out the little pitt bull who had been partially hidden in her cart, gnawing on a white roll. "But wait," she said, as she also opened a pink, paper parasol that matched the cape he was wearing.

Their names weren't offered, rather, stories of killings, dwindling resources, and the unresolved worries of an impoverished life. As it began raining and we parted ways, I couldn't help admire her virtue, a noble consolation that transcended that basic need of survival. She wasn't just a homeless person, she had a dog with a pink cape & parasol. She was someone who went into neighborhoods, demanding respect and encouraging change; a modulation, perhaps, of dwindling options, but also, of noble elegance.

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AQC

Revolt of the Underdogs



2. close-up photo of 'james':

The first time I encountered James, he was sweeping outside a corner store, very honored to have his picture taken. A few days later, I realized that the colorful heap I regularly noticed on the sidewalk, even on many rainy nights, was the same person. Thought he had been drinking the first time I recognized him there, barely distinguishable under covers and bags. Told me his feet swelled up and went numb until he couldn't move. Whenever he felt it coming on, he would grab a blanket and lie down. He hugged me that first time and told me not to worry. A regular on my street, he continues to teach me that it's not about comfort or discomfort, but the grace that we bring to the occasion.