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‘Did I mean what I said
—about the light?’

We walk past an abandoned project
at nightfall, a vast city without light,
and you ask, did I mean what I said?

The buildings are only facades—
broken curses for windows, and the doors
have been locked against us. Or was it

misstatement? We’re students of time,
talking all night, till the darkness
is total, the sirens dry up,

and we have to suspend our search
for the soul of a generation, trapped
in a furnace of rain, a closet of sighs—

I can’t remember which. Yes, I meant it—
to release the energy of a river, an atom,
a wall of coal sheared off in the dark—

and in the glow of the throw of a switch,
two-billion people will read tonight.

David Salner

“Poems have appeared in *Threepenny Review* (Summer 2003 and Fall 2004), *Poetry Daily*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Elixir*, *Margie*, *DC Poets Against the War*, and many other periodicals. My second book, *Mug Shots*, is available from March Street Press. Look me up on Google for many poems online.” D.Salner