



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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Carol Connolly
Saint Paul Poet Laureate
Poem for August 13, 2007

(As Delivered Before Mayor Coleman's 2008 Budget Address)

The sun rises
The drama that is our daily life begins.
We ride bicycles and buses, drive gas guzzlers,
hybrid cars and trucks with Coca Cola logos.
We worry about our daughters who tattoo their ankles.
Worry about our sons who pierce their ears.
Work hard, try to pay our medical bills, play
the roles we have chosen, or have chosen us.
What can we say that hasn't been said?
The notion of no new taxes continues
to stifle progress and strangle compassion.
The endless war hogs our stage.
We spend \$200,000 every minute to sustain
a government in Iraq while Iraqi officials
disappear for a month-long vacation.
There is no vacation for us.
The bridge has collapsed. It is a catastrophe.
We are shocked.
We pull ourselves together, learn new lines
on the run. Race to help. We become
the home town heroes we will forever revere.
Afterwards, back in our old neighborhood,
 -- no matter how far up the hill we move,
 the old neighborhood is a lifeboat --
a powerful thunderstorm has uprooted an ancient tree.
Nothing stays the same. The old tree barricades the block.
We pull over to the curb, stop, weep
and see, against all odds, backyard gardens
safe and flourishing. We are lucky to be alive.
The sun begins to set. Soon, the moon

lights the seven hills of our city,
and we find that we possess the resolve we need
to do what must be done now to stabilize
the neighborhoods of our beloved city.
They are the foundation of our freedom.

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