

## This is a Photograph not Taken

Here—in the space, at the bottom of the page—  
is a photo I had wanted,  
but did not take. At first  
the cellophane covering the white void glints  
harshly, glaring under the light;

then, as I focus  
it duplicates the brilliance of the sun against  
Dover's chalk cliffs. If I stare long enough  
I can almost  
see the glimmer of wet gravel on the bench  
and there in the background, the grey  
in a man's hair. He is sitting on a green bench  
on the promenade, his silver tabby stretched out  
on a pushcart  
filled with his belongings.  
The package of crisps he eats crinkles  
brightly in this image I have of him reading  
(a book that someone had tossed in the rubbish  
because its spine was broken). I can't make out the title  
or even know if it's fiction.

It's difficult to say, what I remember  
accurately, or what distortions  
memory like the angle of a camera creates.

(Weeks later, I will sit  
on a park bench  
beside the North Saskatchewan River  
pat my dog, and pretend  
to read. There I am  
alone  
in a picture that does not exist).

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