

“That Bridge”

a poem inspired by Lonnie Harkins’ photo, *You Decide*

by Elisavietta Ritchie

When you cross that gleaming bridge you should not
over the Neva
Ottawa
Seine
to meet the lover you should not
wear a dark gray coat
over the skimpy red dress you should not
but he likes it

Cover your rampant red curls
with a large gray scarf
that won’t blow off

But it slips free
to catch on the highest span of the bridge
a pennant which floats there forever
beyond the reach of the most intrepid bridge builder
signals forever your unlawful love for the unlawful lover

Watch your shaky step on the now rusty rickety bridge

Hang on as long as you can
for as long as the bridge
and the lover
and you—