



Image: “The Old Paper Mill” by Denise Sedor. “Upstate” was written by Marc Alan Di Martino for *Rattle*’s Ekphrastic Challenge, June 2020, and selected as the Editor’s Choice.

Upstate

by Marc Alan Di Martino

Start with a brief description of the town: its sagging thoroughfares, its battered clock tower. Places like this exist for trains to falter through. Have you ever lost a sock in the wash? Here it is on Mrs. Owens’ clothesline, drying in the rust-ruined sun. Wormholes connect us to outposts like this, main drags so proverbial in their want they must be paintings. What else can capture the hot charred candy center of a soul so beaten it whimpers beneath the rod of time? As if some wicked, wastrel god playing a prank, tossed snake-eyes with trick dice, punished creation out of boredom. Twice.