

DJENEBOU BATHILY

## Street Scream

*Translated from French by Stephanie Papa*

SCREAM

My stomach shrieks

My hands sign

STREET

The road is straight.

Surrounded by traffic,

I glance around.

Buildings loom,

a crowd closes in on me:

protesters.

They heave past.

I want to cry out.

Car exhaust creeps

up my screaming skin,

usurps the smell of nature.

A scream rages in my retinas.

A scream gnaws at my shoulders, devours me.

A scream erupts from my mouth.

The protest groans.

I'm lost.

No numbers on the buildings.

The streetlights die.

My eyes are tormented by the frenzy.

A reflection of my scream in the mirror.

The road becomes an alley, narrow.

My steps take on the rhythm

of mistrust and panic.

The night walks at high speed.

Oppressive shadows.

My scream sleeps, stifles.  
Solar eruption.  
The storm of screams  
Explodes.

“Cri de rue” was written in French and is performed in French Sign Language by Djenebou Bathily. The poem was published in the anthology *Les Mains Fertiles: 50 poètes en langue des signes* (Éditions Bruno Doucey, 2015), which includes a DVD of the poet’s performance.

To view a video performance of this poem, scan the QR code below.

