

ERIN MARTINE SESSIONS

Caesarea Maritima

with ee cummings

Wonder, my dear, at the abandoned
agora and all but forgotten forum
while we walk along the harbour. Ruined
mosaics pave the decumanus and crumble

into marble white, Mediterranean blue,
and onyx black tesserae scattered
on the foundations for careless shoes
to crush: the tessellation interrupted.

Consider, my dear, these declining statues
clamouring for our attention – one sculpture
used to be Artemis, but her virtues
could not cease time's slow decay and this figure

was lately Hadrian, but now his
broken torso has only a few tourists for
lieges – eroding effigies who point us
down the cardo to a forgetful future.

Ponder, my dear, this fading aqueduct
which once supplied a city with water
but now all these channels do is conduct
with us in the hollow amphitheatre

where one hundred and sixty thousand seats
are empty. We perform our parts: Echo
and Pan, singing each other to pieces
but there's no one here to see the show.