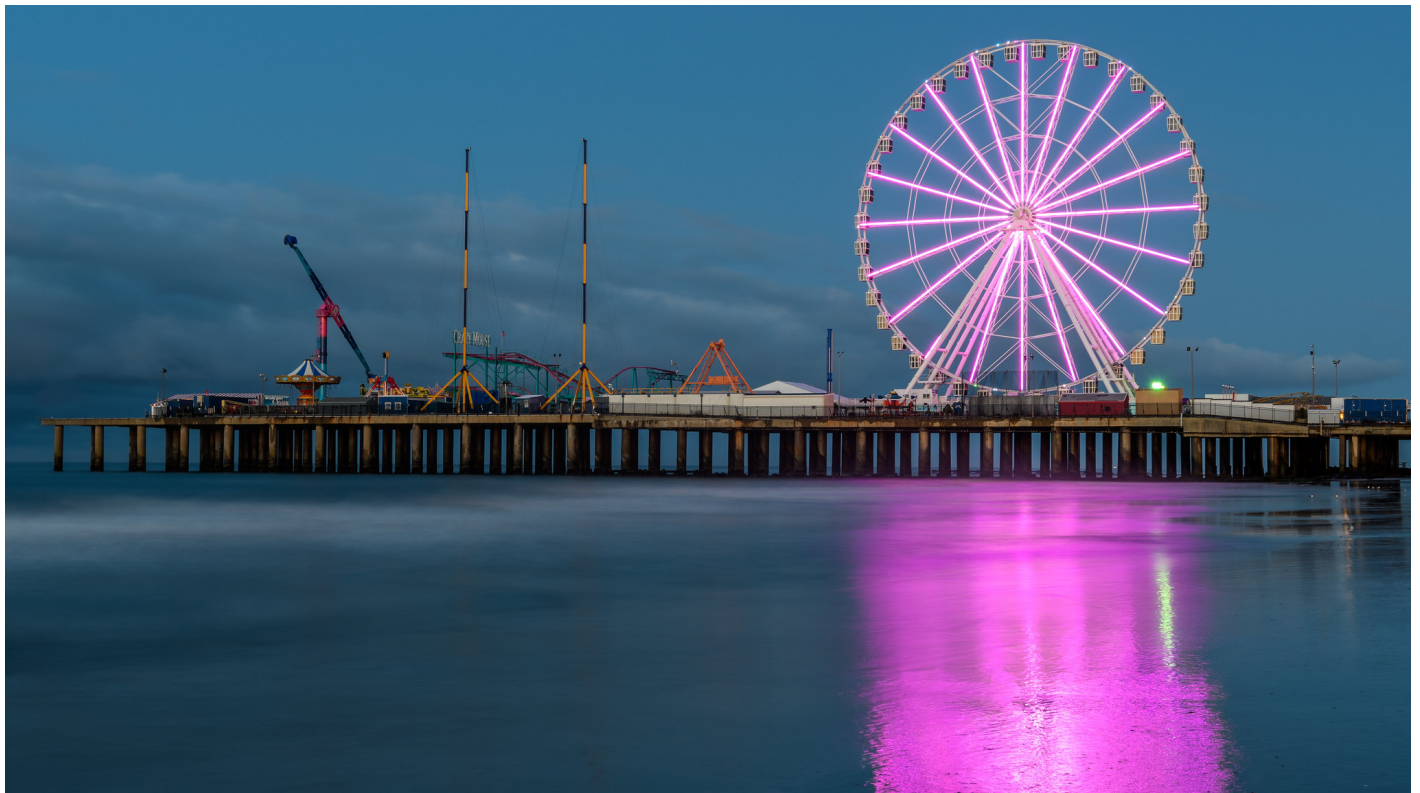


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Poems by JP Howard



Exuberant Pink

exuberant pink is me and mama and that summer seaside house in atlantic city. i am eight years old. i have straight stringy hair with powder-puff pink hair bows at the base of each straggly plait. the inside of the house is every shade of pink i can imagine. pale pink refrigerator with matching kitchen cabinets. if i blink, then open my eyes, i am a kaleidoscope of slivers, all pink. each time i turn the prism a new shade flashes. magenta. soft pink. pink so pale it is translucent. my favorite room is the master bedroom. the bed is big and oval and cotton-candy pink. when i jump onto it each night, that week we stay there, i laugh so loud. mama tickles me "you know that mean you jealous if you laugh real loud when someone tickles you, right, baby girl?" "no, mama, everybody ticklish!" i squeal, laughing so hard i can hardly catch my breath.

- [4]



A List Poem or Praise My Brooklyn Neighborhood During the Pandemic

Praise turquoise sky, shimmer of sun along the East River and New York skyline backdrop

Praise that coffee shop two blocks over in Dumbo

Praise how that one little shop stays open, when almost every other local store is closed now

Praise their mediocre coffee and how my wife and I return to them
each week to order more coffee and greet them with a grateful, "Thank you!"

Praise Brooklyn Bridge Park and her long wide piers that
welcome my love and me each morning on our miles-long walks

Praise Jane's Carousel, in its gorgeous glass pavilion, closed now, during the pandemic

Praise how we pass that empty carousel each day

Praise how my youngest son used to ask me,
"Please, Mama, can I go on it just one more time?" over and over in awe, when the carousel first opened eight years
ago

Praise these legs that carry me forward each day

Praise how Manhattan Bridge and Brooklyn Bridge sparkle, even on cloudy days

Praise these imperfect eyes that brighten at the sight sound of unexpected birds during daily walks through the park

Praise American robins, red-throated loons, northern cardinals, red-billed gulls, and that adorable white-throated sparrow I caught chirping on the branch of a cherry-blossom tree, not far from the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge walkway, just yesterday morning

- [4]

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JP Howard’s debut poetry collection, *SAY/MIRROR* (The Operating System, 2015), was a Lambda Literary finalist. She is also the author of *bury your love poems here* (Belladonna*, 2015) and co-editor of *Sinister Wisdom 107: Black Lesbians—We Are the Revolution!* Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Slowdown* podcast, *Academy of American Poets*, *Split this Rock*, and *Muzzle Magazine*. She is editor-at-large of *Mom Egg Review*’s *MER VOX* quarterly online journal.

For more information, see [JP Howard’s website](#) [7].

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