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The Walk Home at Night

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The Walk Home at Night

Emily Spaine

Sunglasses and Teeth Like Broken Glass sleep rigid in the corner
Fingers wrapped around empty coffee cups
Red neon reflecting off their red coats,
Electric burners cranked
Too high.
Not my problem anymore.
Trash out, recycling out, clock out.

My shadow keeps pace around me.
I am paranoid by my stretched clones,
Grouped,
An entourage to keep me on my toes.
I try to imagine the shadows,
Fanned-out, finger-length petals of a lily.
But I know they're actually
Dust-crusting blades of a fan.

Feet patter faster behind.
Red coats enter my orbit;
One
"Where you goin?"
Two
Lingers close.

Lilies never grow in a yard
They sit next to dish soap and \$8 Himalayan salt
And dream of being commented on.
They are not transplanted,
Collecting cigarette ash on the sidewalk
Around El Sol Elementary.

I must be a fan.
The fan coughs at blue collar skin
While holding up a window
As reliable as the police.
It has to be tilted
Just so
To quiet the clanging and screeching.

“Home.”
No one hears
Because no one cares.

I hurry in the first hours of the day
Trying only to get home.
My shadows
Jeer and mock and prod,
Picking flowers while no one is looking.
Fans stay safe
Churning with no rest.

I'm inside now
And it's too hot.