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Dale Jensen

A NEW LIFE

THE LUXURY OF WELL-MADE FURNITURE

They came for me
 In the caverns of midnight,
 Drumming on the door
 With fists reverberating in the darkness
 My body became stone,
 My tongue a dead slab.
 Their entreating voices
 Caused my heart to hammer
 As if to burst.
 When the clatter of their footsteps
 Receded an eternity later
 My knees buckled
 Like those of a child learning to walk.
 They came for me
 Like an obsessed lover,
 In the stillness of early morning
 And the bustle of mid-afternoon,
 On the next day
 And months later,
 Lulling me to believe
 My stubbornness had defeated them.
 They came for me
 Like a creditor who has forever,
 On spring days that danced
 And winter nights leaking rain,
 Tapping once on the door
 And hammering for hours
 With strange promises of unconditional love.
 They came for me
 Like the stars and tides,
 My silence a ripple
 In their vast ocean,
 My resistance a glacier
 In their infinite furnace.
 They came for me one night
 In the wind and the rain,
 Knocking softly,
 Whispering endearments.
 And exhausted with fear,
 Rebellion and loneliness
 I opened the door
 And invited them in.

on seventy-third avenue
 i saw a kid
 who looked about ten
 with a cellphone
 in a dealer's pose
 leaning against a telephone pole

two times on the bus
 different men behind me
 talking about parole

my front door is shut
 my drinking glass is half full of water
 and has been like that for hours
 if i leave it like that for months for years
 there will be dust accumulated all over it
 will the dust gather? will it precipitate?
 when the bus passes all the horror
 of the way poor people have to live in this country
 i understand but i don't understand how it must feel
 the dust from my middle class upbringing
 the numbness in her voice as she calls emergency
 as the old man lies gasping on his foreign rug
 and the luxury of well-made furniture
 becomes dimmer dimmer
 to his eyes

and the bus passes the chalk outline
 of a human body on the sidewalk
 and a block later you can't see it anymore

