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A Parking Lot at Night

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A Parking Lot at Night

It is the humiliating glow of
the dim streetlights
The cast of shame
A cruel mockery of my fear as a
Distant car alarm causes my rigid body to
Tremor and my cheeks to turn
pale white

It is the glance over my shoulder
The shattering of my independence
The need for a companion to shelter me
From the possibilities of this
empty parking lot

It is the dread that sinks
deep in my stomach as
The sound of crunching gravel echoes
Off nearby buildings and doubles
the footsteps

It is my shaking hands
as I fumble
With my car keys
Scratching the paint
when the metal misses
The slot
It is the glance into the backseat
The locking of doors
The rush to start the car
The final loss of any facade of autonomy I had built up

It is the punchline of an always familiar joke
“A woman walks alone at night”

Amber Cigelske
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