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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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