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Miracles

Lisa A. Nielsen

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Miracles



Lisa A. Nielsen

Lazarus did not have a wife,
but he came back. Ten days
you've been gone
and the kitchen is still the same.
Your butter knife crusted
with toast crumbs. Your cereal bowl
on the counter. I am afraid
to throw you away,
put the bowl in the cupboard,
pour your last carton of milk
down the sink.

[24]

Husband, I have finished the wash.
Only one pair of pants from you.
The blue ones you wore
two days before this started.
I picked through your pockets
looking for some change
to spell your return—
there was only one receipt:
your last lunch from Thomas's.
March 12. 12:06. The chicken
sandwich. I washed you away.
The pants are folded
in your second dresser drawer.
The rest of the laundry came up lintless.

Inside the house—quiet,
the books all read. Outside,
the sky swollen so tight
the moon cannot move.

The stars, one solid flash.
There is nowhere to go—
the heavens are closed.
We spoke once of miracles.
Remember them. Think of Lazarus:
moving his fingers, his toes,
his chest heaving upwards.
If you will your body back
I can do the rest. Your shirts
are already ironed. The sleeves
starched strong as wings.
They could fly from your closet.

Before bed, I brush my teeth
with your toothbrush
and find one red strand of your hair
by the sink. It is a sign—
this too shall pass. I curl myself
in your pajamas, and breathe
you in. I will pray you back.
Eyes. Wrist. Shoulder.

It is possible you have come
as something else. The goldfish
has been swimming your name
for days. Some things
are missing. The cap from the toothpaste.
Your favorite shoes. If you
are hiding, do not be afraid.
Remember, miracles.
They are warmer than they appear.