

First on the Scene

It is late in the shift,

and I am breathing you in.

It has been six months

since anyone has seen you,

smelled your ox tails and rice,

heard the muttered oaths

as you pace the third-floor hall

in rubber flip flops.

It has taken six months,

from what we can tell,

for you to become a dark stain

in your thin, bare mattress,

a pair of empty eye sockets,

a cloud of scent.

I am standing in your place

because, after six months,

you have seeped below the door

filled the air of this tenement flat.

And now, after six months,

you are a skeleton,

a tent of skin,

a jagged knife,

a stolen check,

and I am breathing you in.