Dark-Thirty

by Gary Hardaway

The city's dome of artificial light
ghosts a crosshatch of contrails
under the dimmed stars. The throb

of a Dodge Ram Hemi with after
market pipes dopplers past. No need
to see- the sound declares the facts.

The smell of garlic, soy, and onions
exhausted from Skillman Wok
perfumes December air. You shudder

with the chill and crush the filtered
Marlboro Black against the bottom
of the brown, bakelite ashtray

and retreat to gas-fired warmth
inside a sagging, taxed and mortgaged,
wood-framed, suburban house.

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