

Parking Garage

by Jules Archer

It's that quiet comfortable darkness. One should feel it often and necessarily. I'm briefly reminded of my time in North Dakota. The nursing home where my great grandmother lived. Cement parking garages and yellow headlights. We walked in darkness, hand in hand, until we reached elevators. The journey to her room long. I was afraid, you know. Hating antiseptic and the old. An ageist you called me, laughing. I tugged your hand, bouquet of flowers in my other. It's not funny, I said. It's true but not funny. You lead me down the hall and we entered the room. White sheets pulled back across the pillow. Blank picture frames. Window shades drawn. A nurse came in. I'm so sorry, she said, she passed. It's too late. I pressed firm fingertips against my lips. Silently mouthed thank god.

