

# GONE

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You pause at the subway entrance by the blind woman. Every evening she shows up for the commuter rush, rattling her cup, hustling for coins. Tonight you press your bagged lunch, uneaten, into her hands, then pull out the crumpled twenty you found wedged in your pencil drawer. She mumbles thanks, so you stuff your hat and leather gloves and the Ray-Ban's your ex gave you last Christmas into her waiting lap. So many riches, all at once, and for the smallest instant you wish you were her, you wish you were anyone but yourself. She leans closer, she smells of grease and raw onion and the street, and peers into the Xerox box hugged tight against the curve of your hip. When you question the veracity of her condition, she laughs, a smoke-smoothed cackle, and you think, what does it matter?

The escalator whisks you silent into the dim bowels of the station. At the bottom, the box thuds at your feet: mug, wedding photo, the 25-year pen. You think you should feel lighter, somehow unencumbered, but you don't. The platform trembles. The cold rush of air precedes the oncoming train.

