

Grief Leaves the Room

by Philip F. Clark

It leaves on a Saturday,
suddenly, while you are raking
leaves or taking out the trash.
Those inevitable, boring things.
You do not hear it go;
it's been quiet before when
it left certain rooms. It no longer
sleeps beside you, and you learned
long ago that the bed was seldom warm,
yet, the least of it was never about
a missing body. You've made the bed
nonetheless.

Eventually, eventually
you do not return its calls,
and really, what letter might you write --
How is the weather there? Do you have
the company of others?
It unclasps its hand from yours.
There was no urgency in its exit;
perhaps it was just a visitor all along,
there when you needed it, with news
of the outside world.
Your body has lost its ghost --
a gentle amputation. There was no pain.

In its place came the mundane
art of acceptance, and you are able
to respond to emails, listen
to the opera, deal with late rent.
It never had a name, though you tried
so many on for size. Nothing fit

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when you tried to wear it
and you could not return a thing.
You are well-dressed now, naked
in your best. Tomorrow is Sunday.
The day of rest.

