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## MATINEE, END OF AUGUST

The several dark  
where it was safe to feel

still wearing off our faces,  
we stumble out  
with packs of strangers

like red-eye passengers  
exiting a jet,  
crumbs and random warmths  
scattered among the recliner seats.

The future, like a memory,  
seeps back slowly:

which car, which color-coded floor . . .  
It ought to have rained.  
We'd wanted not to hurry.  
But every door

to the reassembling world  
knows we're there already,  
and slides open.

## GHOST AT THE HY-VEE

I'd seen him just two months before—  
his brother's service, condolences  
over orange juice—but when I shook Dan's hand

between aisles, my lips spoke "Jack."  
Or Jack spoke "Jack" through me, slipping back  
by vowel rhyme, and scrambling to remain

among the glint and friction of the jumbo carts,  
midday's automatic produce mists. Cheeks drained,  
then flushed, believing too much at once

to speak, I glanced toward Dan, his eyes  
fixed below on the ceiling fans' reflections—  
each circulating blade leaking up

through floor varnish. Returned to himself,  
he laughed it off, clapping my back like a man,  
like a Dan would, but more softly than that.