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Visitor

There is a visitor
to everyone you think you know-
they have a visitor
who is sneaking out the back door
to make room for the visitor just walking
inside, quietly placing their jacket over the railing
and removing their shoes
the same visitor who leaves you
with a tremble in the night as you
jostle awake to the sound of the door shutting
behind them
the visitor who leaves a flower
as a thank you,
a visitor who is your visitor,
on their way to be someone else's.

Infection

The patient wasn't old
the look on his face was
tired when the
bandage was removed
and there was a
chilling reminder of
the man's eyes
when he changes his
mind one day and
not even his daughter
knew why
it was first only
a small red circle
but when the foot went numb
the head soon followed
suddenly the face
went faceless
and they knew that he was
hardened. incurable
with satisfaction in his expression.

Seven and a half years, They had me Wait

I will never forget sitting with four other men
believing my captors would realize their mistake
then with a tube up my nose,
it all became excruciatingly clear.
My family thrown into poverty
their letters were returned
“undeliverable”
not because they were dangerous
their messages:
secret information, I never saw or heard.
These are the things I don't want to write about
90 prisoners and America will not give a home to one of them
innocent men remain
and though the government ordered me free,
I will never forget sitting with four men
in a squalid room, at Guantanamo.
A letter to those men
censored- out of my head -
feverishly, I write,
and they still wait for their seventh and a half year
as it drags into their tenth.

The Inside

It's the way you can feel dawn
in the evening
and give it to someone else.
It's there suspended in our homesickness
and if we stare hard enough,
we'll never forget what we are looking at.
I want to be able to tell you
exactly what it looks like
when an article of clothing
turns into a memory, sagging
in my hands the instant that I pick it up,
and has me desperate to restore a laugh.
That same laugh, at that particular table
and you in that certain shirt.
To have it circle me like a ghost
or to relive it in a cry
that dries out my mouth
and whimpers at me like a ghost.

Someone's Sister

Never let your phone die or else they'll get fowl, and you might miss something important. Be available and learn how to put yourself last. Talk sensitive and only think with resentment. Remember to ask about everything before a single question falls concerning you, be honest but never tactless and only speak of your quality in regards to your effort in reading and studying. Make sense out of who you are, for their sake, pretend to have if need be. Don't speak of the extra effort that goes into tricking yourself out of bed daily and always try to be 10 years older than you actually are. Don't admit too quickly to feeling overwhelmed and learn how to calm yourself down. Offer your help when they give you a tired look, offer you companionship that will forever be permanent. Forget about the time that you want to yourself and take a moment to step around in someone else's shoes. Be frustratingly curious when you have to. Only break when you feel the burden of your own health. Always talk about the next time you'll see them, and the longing that you feel when they go away. Call back and leave a message if no one answers. Give away all the affection you wish to be given to you. Pray that it is a relief for someone else to hear your voice on the other line.

Appear

No one climbed on the table
to press their thumb to the glass
 To squint and resist the morning
 It won't blind them.

We all allow ourselves to say
 That no errors can be replaced
 And that clocks are thin

And make more time.

But something is missing
when we don't really care
 Like the glow gone from
 the eyes of a friend
 who just finished a hand-made gift.
Wishing their message were read.

In a Big House

Today it is home where the fish tank makes noises
the family cannot find their cat and their daughter
wants to be lost too.

She wants to run away, but they will never let her leave
they only let her get mad.

By nighttime you cannot hear the fish tank anymore.

but you do hear three voices

and the girl didn't run away

but she is still thinking about it

when her mother leaves the room to feed the fish.

Mary

Ear muffs cover some of the sounds
as Mary pushes her cart
through the grocery store
her warm long coat covers her frail body
as she leans over the display to get
the last batch of her favorite muffins.

Mary is 68 years old.

She makes you want to wear ear muffs
she makes you want to talk to her
she makes you want to ask her questions
she makes you want to reconsider
you love Mary, without really knowing her
but you love her, you truly do.