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Aftermath

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AFTERMATH

It hurt worse to unlearn
the fable of dawn. The fact

is a slack gray tongue
that bisects night and day:

morning skulks through the crack,
finite and flat.

Inured as a god, it nods at a girl
through the window of a closed video store.

She is wobbly, unsure
on her feet, mopping badly

through hot strata of nausea,
a taut skein of taint.

She's reckoning the million
small shards of an act, auditioning

its name, giving the rude
rip of it up to the air,

who softens it
into a premise,

unclaimed. At ten,
it's old

men tapping
at the glass doors

and tasks, tender birds
blue-blank as forgiveness, that flock

to edit the heft
and hum of memory.