

Prayer of a Sears Carpet Technician

Gabrielle Hoyt

In my line of duty
I have seen the final resting place
of mistaken steps and faltered grips.
They manifest in the shapes
of treaded dirt
and the deep sticky red
of spilt cabernet.
I mourn for the knuckles,
knotted white,
that scrub
the stubborn stains.

Today I ripped the outline
of a father off the floorboards
of his bedroom.
I learned that humans too,
can stain.

His family had only been gone a week.
The lack of cellular service
kept any alarms from going off
when seven days passed without a call.
*“Dad is working hard on his sales report,
Dad is working hard pedicuring the lawn.”*

After the police,
then coroner,
then yellow hazmat suits,
the last eulogy is left for me.

As I worked
his wife chewed on
Xanax in the kitchen,
while his children placed
plastic stethoscopes
against their hearts,
listening for any lapse in beat.

I stared hard at the silhouette
stamped into the carpet,
the ink of decomposed flesh.
Six foot something,
but when arteries collapsed
foundations crumbled onto the floor.

I whistled three Hail Marys
while I packed up the fabric.
My rosary did not sway
the entire drive to the landfill.