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### What They Say is True: Your Other Senses Do Sharpen When You Only Have Darkness to Look Forward To

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# What They Say is True: Your Other Senses Do Sharpen When You Only Have Darkness to Look Forward To

Courtney Hilden

I picked  
out the coffin by smelling inside  
each, worried that we were getting  
something previously  
occupied or a rental. Neither would  
do for Mother, so I rejected the one that smelled  
of petrol and potato sacs. I sang her favorite  
hymns with the enthusiasm I generally save  
for sand bagging. I decided  
after the divorce I wanted to memorize

your snow crutched steps  
that I can hear from my bed when you think  
I won't know of your visits. The house feels it too:  
her joints snap to attention. If you'd just shuffle  
your feet across the carpet, she'd rev you up  
for a doorknob shock.

Perhaps you visit me because I come to stare at your  
home by holding out my right arm and counting  
seven mailboxes. Don't clean up for me; it looks the same  
as everything  
now. You must notice the white salt  
line halfway up my jeans, the soiled  
sneakers. The ice underneath itches  
for me to slip. Tell me if the night brims  
like those cups of coffee that Sharon used  
to serve us on our breaks,

but I know better: You're at the strip  
mall parking lot, smoking  
with the other boys, playing  
Focus Tailgate or Camry Bar,

depending on what shift works close,  
the perimeter decked out with bullet holes,  
the crush in your van's fender unhealed.

One night you will circle my lawn and return  
to your vehicle and find me feeling at the indent.  
trying to measure my former body like a man  
evaluating the growing ticks on his mother's  
kitchen's door frame. It forms in my mind  
like a child with Play-Doh, squishing into  
shape. Were any of us ever  
this small? Yes and no.