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Origin Story

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ORIGIN STORY

Rosey Jones



I imagine a dark and stormy night,
fat drops of rain sliding down window panels
like spilled ink across a canvas.
She must have been crying—my mother.
In the movies, they're always crying.
She must have been alone, left behind
by some mysterious lover with dark eyes
too poor to buy a loaf of bread,
much less feed
her only daughter.
She was likely wrapped in a thread-barren cloak,
soaked to the bone from the rain and from her tears.

I imagine she stole
quick glances to the left and right
before dashing across the muddy street
and laying me down gently on the marbled gray step,
swaddled in a pale pink blanket,
my closed eyes quivering with unseen dreams,
my right thumb tucked between my lips.
With a soft stroke across my forehead, she knocked on the front door,
fleeing breathlessly around the corner,

and watched as the door opened to reveal an older woman,
dark skin and dark eyes with laughter creased in the corners.
She cooed and looked around before she bent to gather me up.

All I got from them instead was one sentence:
I was found outside the police station
right on the front step.

But everyone knows the orphanages lie.
They lied, they lie, they always lie.

We were all found on the police step
or in the market
or the public bathroom
or on the street corner.
We were all left behind
by a crying mama, surely,
on a dark and stormy night.

One night, I had a dream that I was falling into a black hole,
dropping down at exponential speeds, air slicing my cheeks
when suddenly I jolted awake, muscles tense and fists clenched.
It feels like a weight is sitting on my chest.
My eyes dart around in the darkness, hungry
to see what I swore was there,
but my mind already knows the truth my eyes haven't recognized:
nothing was there all along, it was all just a dream.