



The Poetry Of Persuasion

You were late.
Running across the cool evening grass,
barefoot from playing kickball
until you couldn't see the ball anymore.
Across the neighbor's lawns,
across the quiet, rough tar of the street,
across the dusty dirt of the playground,
the stilled tether ball quiet
against the cool steel of the pole.
Across the darkening schoolyard,
your heart pumping and thumping in your chest.
It was curfew. Or it was dinner time.
Or it was the first few moments after
your first awkward kiss. Only now,

the strange car in the driveway
as you round the corner on your block,
and the uniformed visitor's leaving, his hat
in his hands, and your mother, finally, slumped
against the post of the front porch. Everything

changed in an instant. Your whole world shifted
deep beneath where you stood, riveted,
twelve years old, your sweaty neck cooling
as the streetlight switched on.
Frozen, as you were, to the spot
across the street, watching, certainly,
the diorama of someone else's life.

The engine of his car fired up.
The taillights disappeared down the street,
and you were left alone.

FIRST MAN BURIED AT SEA

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