

Double-Vision

by Laura Treacy Bentley

I didn't wear my contacts,
 so Jim Wayne's strong face becomes
 a comfortable blur of eyes and chin.
 The hypnotic hum of an air conditioner
 and the commanding tone of his voice
 are Sunday morning familiar.

Slowly, I lean forward,
 resting elbows on knees.
 My eyes focus anew on his
 softly fused face.
 I start with recognition.
 The high forehead and thick eyebrows
 are all there.
 I blink and just as quickly
 this familiar image dissolves.

I have seen my father's stooped shoulders
 silhouetted against whitewashed viaducts,
 and I have heard his laughter in small bars.

I have watched his long fingers
 push a grocery cart full of aluminum cans,
 only to stop, thin and pale under July heat,
 to light a cigarette just to torment me.

I have heard his *hello* in my brother's voice
 and in the very bend of his signature.
 And today, because I could not

see, he returns to startle
 me again.

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