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after café wha? and the gaslight

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after café wha? and the gaslight

Elizabeth Theriot

Ryan Chighizola Memorial Scholarship Winner

chords pull a leashed alphabet through the bar,
a half-hour tourniquet that binds verses
for another shuffled neon tribe;
all grey, and the red eyes blinking.
he never planned to stay anyway,
not in this hole of patronizing brows and ugly light
ugly ice-cold heart attacks

(then)

odes at the foot of an iron hospice bed,
the first father's calloused hand blesses
the new first son newly crowned prophet

"this machine kills fascists" his guitar read,
and "careful what you wish for, boy" he might have said.

(meanwhile)

1. a generation swallowed dry by rhythmic lamentations
2. the whip-lash howl of social dissention
3. scorn shaded blue

and it was only 1962.

(like hell he'd be crucified for self-appointed wise men cant sell tickets if you're dead
cant sell vinyl nothing's final in this city but the

gutter