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Walking Home to My Trailer

by James Valvis

I couldn't get over how much trailers looked like coffins.

The park seemed a funeral field after a mass suicide,
a Jonestown where the people decided to tidy up
after themselves. I once had a black lab
that did everything with me, but he went off
and breathed his last in the woods.

That was what it was like watching neighbors return
from nights out at the bar, stumbling into their trailers.

First, they'd embalm their bodies.

Now, they lay their souls to rest.

The only thing left to someone else was the burial,
the tossing of dirt on the whole of their lives,
which eventually came along as a pink slip at work
or their wives packing one afternoon.

I had to walk by their bald lawns to get home
after my shift at the gas station.

and what got to me was how neat it all was,
how sanitary and safe. Even the messes were clean,
even the madness the sane kind of insanity.

Complaining was common, but the quietest corners
in any community are its cemeteries.

I thought about this every night, trudging
by those trailers, and then I opened the door of my own,
climbed straight into bed, and slept.