

■ POETRY ■

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LIST POEM

At 10, I pack a backpack with
deli ham, toothbrush, favorite pen.
Tiptoe around my mother's friends
draped over armchair, kitchen table, wood floor.
A skein of discarded body parts:
tattooed arms, skinny legs, torsos out of tone,
and one sagging, droopy penis.
Careless cigarettes melt black
polka dots in the rough, industrial carpet.
I step over shed jeans, knocked boots,
a needle, beer bottle, and a crumpled pack
of unfiltered Camels.
The sound of my breath
echoes off empty walls where no pictures hang.
Outside, I upright my bicycle,
my escape plan.
I saddle its rusted frame and hope
the chain lasts under tension.
My legs, now pumping, now burning like
my mother's boyfriend's eyes, hash pipe, rage.