In the Night

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IN THE NIGHT

When she finally got inside her apartment, she shut the door quickly and locked it. Her breath was short from running as she closed her eyes and slid down the door. Crouched on the floor, she laid her head on her arms and took several deep, shaky breaths.

At first she had enjoyed walking alone from the bus-stop to her apartment at night. Being a small-town girl, she was trusting, and the night air made her feel at home. The first time she'd suspected someone was following her, she'd laughed it off and scolded herself for becoming paranoid about the city so soon. She liked the city. During the day the bustling of people was a curiosity for her, and at night the quiet was filled with strange city sounds.

She rose from the floor, closed the curtains, and turned on a light. In the kitchen, she took the teapot from the stove, filled it with water and replaced it, lighting a flame under it. She turned around and stared at the refrigerator door.

A few weeks ago she had been sure someone was following her. She didn't know what the man looked like; she never dared glance over her shoulder. But his footsteps were heavy in the night and their pace slowed and quickened with her own. Later, she blamed the whole incident on her imagination, when she'd had no followers for a few nights.

She shook her head and looked away from the refrigerator. She went into the bedroom and removed her clothes, leaving them in a heap in the corner. In the bathroom, she turned on the hot water in the tub. It gushed steaming from the faucet.

When she noticed he was following, she'd made a game of trying to figure out his identity. She knew he rode the same bus and got off just before the bus pulled away. Each night she'd look from face to face, trying to get a clue to his identity, but no one on the bus showed a flicker of recognition.

With the tub over half full, she turned the water off and stepped in. She washed her body vigorously, then lay back, her skin scrubbing and the heat. The steam hazed her head where the water stopped steaming.

The walk to her apartment got longer each night, but she was always afraid to hurry. One night he seemed so near she could almost breathe and feel the hot air on her face. When she reached her apartment, she heard footsteps stop, then retreat quickly. The first time she turned full around to look, he was gone and the street lay empty before her.

The teapot began to hiss and whistle. She rose from the bath, and from the tub. With a towel wrapped around herself, she rescued the teapot and made some tea.

Tonight he had followed more closely than before, and when she could no longer breathe, she felt his hand upon her shoulder. She turned her mouth to scream, but nothing came out. Turning her around to face him in the light, he took the tea, she went to the edge of the bed, she warmed her hands, and sipped the tea.

His eyes were all she could remember. He seemed distant and unfamiliar as he turned her to do. The feel of his body upon her face, but she feared for her life if she f
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Finally got inside her apartment, she quickly and locked it. Her fear from running as she closed her own the door. Crouched on her head on her arms and took shaky breaths. She had enjoyed walking alone from her apartment at night. Being a trusting, and the night quiet, she was trusting, and the night quiet was home. The first time she was following her, she's and scolded herself for becoming the city so soon. She liked the day the bustling of people was her, and at night the quiet was the change city sounds.

From the floor, closed the curtains, light. In the kitchen, she took the stove, filled it with water, lighting a flame under it. She stared at the refrigerator door. As ago she had been sure someone her. She didn't know what the man she never dared glance over his footsteps were heavy in her pace slowed and quickened with her blamed the whole incident on her when she'd had no followers for a month.

She put her head and looked away from the her. She went into the bedroom and clothes, leaving them in a heap in the bathroom, she turned on the the tub. It gushed steaming from

When she noticed he was following her again, she'd made a game of trying to figure out his identity. She knew he rode the same bus as she and got off just before the bus pulled away. Each night she'd look from face to face for a clue to his identity, but no one on the bus showed a flicker of recognition.

With the tub over half full, she turned the water off and stepped in. She washed herself vigorously, then lay back, her skin pink from scrubbing and the heat. The steam rose around her head where the water stopped short of her chin.

The walk to her apartment got longer each night, but she was always afraid to look back. One night he seemed so near she could hear him breathing and almost feel the hot air on her neck. When she reached her apartment, she heard his footsteps stop, then retreat quickly. For the first time she turned full around to look, but he was gone and the street lay empty before her.

The teapot began to hiss working up to a whistle. She rose from the bath, and drained the tub. With a towel wrapped around herself, she rescued the teapot and made some tea.

Tonight he had followed more closely than before, and when she could no longer hear the bus, she felt his hand upon her shoulder. She opened her mouth to scream, but nothing came out. He turned her around to face him in the moonlight.

Taking the tea, she went to the bedroom and put on her heavy flannel nightgown. Sitting on the edge of the bed, she warmed her fingers and sipped the tea.

His eyes were all she could remember seeing, and the glint of the knife in his hand. His voice seemed distant and unfamiliar as he told her what to do. The feel of his body upon her repulsed her, but she feared for her life if she fought him.
When the tea was finished, she turned back the covers and crawled under them. Hugging her body to herself, she lay still for a moment, then great sobs racked her body and she cried, alone in the safety of her bed.

/Beth Dunsmore/

MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms hide in the dark green fc
Sprouting longer in the squinting s
Hiding under the comfort of leaves
Leaning and Learning
Living and Smiling
Fall comes and so do people
Quietly sneaking along the ground
Picking up leaves and then throwing

/Maryann/