Birthday

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Cover Page Footnote

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Birthday

there was a cake
as there has always been
candles and smiles
wrapped with ribbons
the old men shook my hand
telling me how they once were
a very long time ago
while the children stared
in quiet disbelief
of tears on a birthday
birthdays are like rainy sundays
they just happen
I grew so tired
of all the laughing kisses
congratulating me
for something I couldn’t change
I thanked them all
for they meant well
and then reread your drug store card
wondering where you were then.

Four

I’ve been lying here waiting.
For the sun to flicker out.
For the clocks to run backwards.
Anything to change the way it has been.
The days close by go much slower
than those did that are distant now.
I’ve kept track of the hours
with empty cigarette packs
that held twenty thin companions.
I’ve kept track of the days
with unfilled envelopes covered with your address.
Much too small to hold your portion of that day’s thoughts.
I’ve kept track of the months
with pencil marked calendar pages
and the rainfall of leaves in the wind.
I’ve been lying here waiting
for you to come home.

Dennis O’Brien

Ed Wurtz

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