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Thrifting

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Goodwill smells of sweat and whiskey. Still the tightwad
palms her penny. Nothing can escape
her grip. She does not wish

to be rich, only safe,
which is a way of backing slowly
into an unbuttoned cardigan sweater,

like Mr. Rogers (*R.I.P.*)
whose words were parsimonious,
as if he had no rage, no urge, no penis.

Yet Fred was as masculine—in his way—
as Abe, whose head the shopper holds
hard in her hand

until it marks her skin: a red ring with no tail,
its beginnings fused to its ends,
impossible to keep,

impossible to spend.
The cost of the loafers is unclear black
marker scrawled on black leather.

*O Fred, your name means peace in the tongues of the ancestors—
so why these needs, these expenditures?
Peace suspended, peace-in-amber—
won't you be my neighbor?*