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The Alchemist Works at Midnight

Alchemy is not illegal,
though the Bible says
don't mess with magic.
I take my damnation seriously.
Cold winter nights,
I plumb the depths of reality,
charm elements
until they give up their identity
and change
to other elements entirely.

I cried frustration
when every possible market
rejected this short story
and this essay.
I would have wagered
they would publish,
but I put them into the bin
where they accumulated dust
of years passing to years.

I apply fire, boil essences.
Golden moonlight
shines in my window
a willing participant
in a conspiracy through all time.
I sprinkle magic powders
indiscernible
from the dust of passing time,
dust of increased wisdom,
dust of developing perspective,
dust of broadening experience,
until the essential being
of this stillborn prose
sheds pages of irrelevancy,
transmutes
to a few flowing lines of poetry,
changeling of rhythm,
bright nugget from the center.
I am happy as fresh fruit punch,
though not all that glitters is gold.

This poem won't pay my mortgage
nor mow my lawn
nor run necessary errands
in the coming day.

History forgets unkempt lawns
foreclosed dwellings,
petty problems
of individual material survival.

The gibbous moon falls
toward western trees.
Quickly,
before it leaves me this night,
I will weave its soft silver light
to golden lines,
lasting images,
a delicious flavor
lingering in
the beholder's thought.