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My Friend Named Fear

Mireille A. Roman

I should learn to shake off the small fear when I go out.
Then again maybe I shouldn't.
Maybe it's a good thing,
Maybe it's good to be on your toes;
Danger could jump out from any corner.
It can happen.
It could be your 21st birthday and your friend is your designated walker
And she's taking care of you
And when you're going to your second bar of the night,
The bartender who stared at your curves wrapped in black
from head to toe
Tells you
Her ID is fake
But yours is fine.
"You can stay, but she has to go."
You're shocked.
No
That's crazy
Why does she need to leave
He repeats that you can stay but she needs to go.
Your friend gets upset at this absurdity because she doesn't
want to leave you,
So you argue that it's a real ID.
Plus she's 22.
He refuses to take a second look at her ID,
But he can't tear his eyes off of you,
So in discomfort you take your business elsewhere.
You go a couple bars over
And as you two are getting ID'd again that creepy bartender
bursts through the door—

He followed you.

“You can stay but she needs to go.” He’s darting your way.

He’s getting louder and louder.

You put yourself between them
And you know it can go crazy,
But she’s not going to leave you here alone and you’re not going to stay.

He’s going to call the cops on her.

Crazy bartender gets the new bartender on his side
And now they both scan your curvy shape and remind you that you can stay,

But she needs to go.

You collect your umbrella and head for the exit.

You grab your friend who tries to cause a scene and dart to the door.

You know what intentions lie behind that gaze.

Maybe it’s good to be on your toes.

It’s good that you see things that make you fear to be alone.

It’s kind of sad.

And you kick rocks on your way home.

She’s upset and venting and ranting about fighting,

But it has to be this way.

The small voice of fear is peaking in your head.

It’s keeping you from letting life repeat what happened

That morning you woke up with a bump on your head
and a stranger in your bed...

The little fear keeps you alive one night at a time.