“Narcoleptic Insomniac”

by Julia Brennan

*Night*. Headlights move across the walls. I’m wide awake. I climb out of bed, jostling him as I do so. Quietly, I play Wagner and waltz with the shadows. The music swells and I sigh as it caresses me. He groans and places a pillow over his head.

*Day*. I spoon peanut butter into my mouth with a finger, straight from the jar. He won’t drive me to work anymore. I make him late. The hard bench at the bus stop feels heavenly. I’m dead tired. My head bobs forward. Sleep. When I awaken, my skirt is streaked with peanut butter. The jar sits in the street. I’m late for work.

*Night*. I stare into the bathroom mirror. Tug at the bags under my eyes. Foundation. Eye liner. Mascara. Blush. Uncap a tube of red lipstick and glide it across my mouth. I smack my lips and kiss the mirror like a lover until I’m gasping for breath. The girl in the mirror gazes at me through streaks of red. “Lovely,” she tells me.

*Day*. It’s Saturday. He sleeps in. Sunshine warms my skin as I jog through the park. I check my watch. A quarter mile. Stop. I lie in the grass, bathing in light. Sleep. I awaken at sunset. My legs tickle. Ants.

*Night*. The tide strokes the shore. It’s lovely. Where he is doesn’t matter. Deep breath. Dive.

*Day*. I jingle my keys while reading the morning paper. He never liked it, but I’ll do it forever.