Two Poems by Larry D. Thacker

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LARRY D. THACKER

In a town

In a town like this,  
mountain-edged, hemmed  
in with never drying streams  
of pills and that smell  
of a little meth  
always hanging in the air  
off a thin couple’s coats  
at the convenience store,  
a new jagged pile of some  
newly deceased user’s  
belongings stacked  
at the rental’s curbside appears,

resting there rotting suddenly,  
overnight maybe, or  
dropping out of the sky  
while you’re at work,  
forgotten for a week, maybe two,  
near everything they owned  
when they were found  
dead, the same guys as usual hired  
out for the same routine,  
mindlessly dragging what’s  
left in the unit to the corner  
(there’s money to be made)  
for the city to magically  
dispose of whenever they  
manage unless it catches fire  
and saves them the trouble:

couch, loveseat, bed frame,  
box springs, mattress, lamp,  
coffee table, bedding, rugs,  
trash bags of clothes, bicycle  
tire, towels, a long dead fern.
Walking by, it doesn’t stink of something in there, giving a terrible odor, but smells of something vital, long missing.
Preparing the Chapel

*Icons hate the dark,* Irene McKinney told us, and they do, though without voice and light we guess for them, assuming

our own anxieties and fears of the time, of dark and death and bills and bankruptcies, all of it lifted up as sacred to translate as inanimate

raw spiritual material for corralling our fears into a room full of yet-lit candles where we’re encouraged to pray regularly

over generations in the desert as things crumble to a sufficiently decrepit state, staring eye-to-eye at a thing that won’t blink first, never, never.