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Rochelle Spencer

The Laundromat Was a Portal

And it pulls me into somewhere else. That's why my husband does the laundry. He's a good brother. He walks to the laundromat and twenty silver quarters slap his pockets, new and angry. ~~[They don't want to be spent. They think they're heaven-sent. They want their silvery shine. They won't fall in line. They don't want to work. They don't want to clean up our dirt.]~~ **My husband must have really loved me. My husband must have really loved me.** The laundromat's demons hide in its yellow walls. The machines spill quarters, coins thunder to a half-mopped floor. The other machines are possessed. Loud and sudsy, they blow bubbles and shake ~~[[shake it don't break it took your momma 9 months to make it]]~~ they shake that little bookshelf cozy with novels and coloring books and newspapers and free wifi. *All you hear is death and the heat of the dryers.* You look around and see lives swirling, *time moving,* BABY CLOTHES MIXED WITH GRANDPA SWEATERS. A pizza shop next door. Who understands why a laundromat causes terror. A man with gold eyes startles me. He watches his clothes bounce up and down in a machine that looks like a spaceship. His eyes dull from gold to green and I leave the laundromat while our clothes are still wet. *A shirt, bright like a flag, suggests surrender.* But who listens? *You run out of the laundromat because you can't understand* why the man's eyes keep changing colors like a traffic light, gold then green, *and then you get stopped by the man on the bicycle and then you can't walk down the street because when you try to move your path is blocked.* **And then you move left and the bike moves left. Then you move right and the bike moves right.** You close your eyes and when you open them you've moved sixty feet down the street and you don't know how you got there...Keep your heart open during tumultuous times¹.

¹ Michael B. Beckworth