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A Dark Lonely Street

Chandra Shekhar Pal

A dark, lonely street.
It's name does not matter,
and neither does the city's name.
It's all the same.
Deserted streets and grotesque shadows mark my way.
The want of striding with my head held high
contrasts sharply with fear of being noticed
like the edge of a lamp's light with darkness.
The flickering lights are my only company.
They are also the only one I want.
A human companion is the last need
and the biggest worry.
The way ahead is clear.
The air outside is stifling.
The funny thing is I ventured out
to escape the stifling at home.
The thought of encountering people scares me.
Their silent judgement unnerves me.
Their assessment of my virtue, my personality
terrifies me, as does their actions after judging.
Assessing others before themselves,
I detest their judgemental mindset.
Yet the mindset is omnipresent
spanning across states and societies.
Till their mind changes, I have no option

but to continue on my path,
alone on a dark, lonely street
and hope not to encounter them.