

LIGHTS OUT

by Janet Ruth

In shallow water on the edge of a pond
the giant water bug stalks a leopard frog
latches onto it
with its proboscis injects digestive juices
sips the frog's liquified body as if with a straw.

*My life is being
sucked away—*

boyhood on the farm

Europe after the war

the pyramids at Giza

words

shotgun

glove

garden rake

newspaper

baseball

football

ice skates

story-telling

playing jokes

the way home from church

who I am

*—left behind
a rattling shell.*

Bits of me that remain—

half a grin

joke without a punch-line

too-tight bear hug

moment of recognition

*—spark occasionally
in the wreckage of my world.*

They harbor no evil intent
neither bug nor disease
just go about their business of living
from the dying
no sadistic leer
no hard feelings
no feelings at all.

Now almost everything

is gone

my empty skin

crumples

nothing left inside

will the last

person out

please

turn off the lights?

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