WALLACE LANE

# Groceries

My grandfather and I cross paths at our local grocery store,
where he is a janitor venting to mops,
cleaning a careless and accidental mess.

Patrons browsing shelves,
desperate for late night options,
we meet between the produce aisles,

where wilted kale and day-old meat smell of certain dis-pleasantries.

Our greetings never heartfelt,
talk as small as spoon-fed portions.

I reach out to shake his hand,
offer a smile in exchange—

his touch more silent than soft—
the grip he once raped my grandmother with.

Blinking—
this grocery store becomes a dark room,
a place that will never feed my hunger.

I'm centered, face-to-face

with the man of my same flesh and gristle,
with my lineage a blur,
twin glitches in our cheeks.
with a man who does not know my name.