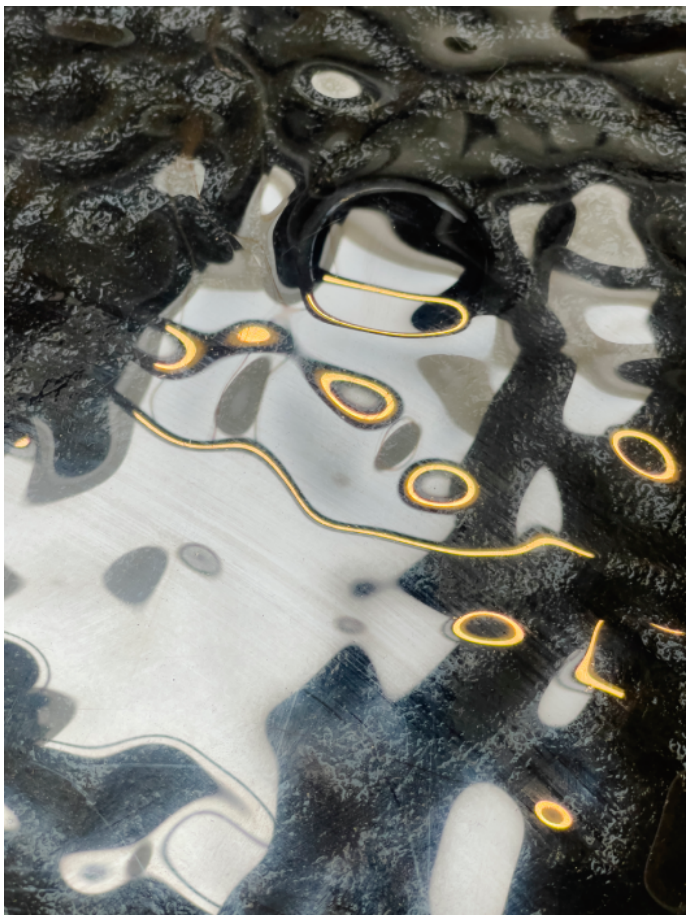
FLASH FICTION

Cloth

by Niels Bekkema



Untitled by Harald Wawrzyniak

Tint Journal, no. 14 (September 2025), www.tintjournal.com

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He would have liked to try sentences — to feel their weight. Better still, he would have liked to stand up, to extend his back and press the crown of his head into the ceiling, to feel the chandelier resting on his shoulders, but a few blocks away, the end was beginning. Pieces of paper fell from the withered branches of the orange trees. The knock on the door, the smothered rustle of heavy cloth in the corridor, footsteps, soft as if in snow: nothing ever happened twice. Besides, if everything had names it would be overcrowded, but the hotel — a place of many rooms, large and small — was empty. He reclined, marvelling at everything shuffling toward him like prizes glinting on a bed of coins. A clerk appeared. His face blurred and spread behind the thick acrylic sheet as he spoke of coin-sized specks. Stars under a bridge. Lucky water. He tried talking back, but no matter where he was – in the crowded dining room with its excellent mayonnaise, the desolate hallways or even in the comforts of his room — he became overwhelmed by an indifference that took his voice away. After all, why should he concede authority when the clerk could only cast a limited perspective on the matter? He decided to find some words instead, and, for better or worse, turned away as the cameras clicked like locusts, chewing through the dim, faceless cloth that hung before everything carrying names.

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