

SOLIDARITY

When we enter the shimmery racket
of the clothes store in the local mall, and when I am marked
by the four-dollar-an-hour rent-a-cop,
both of us trolling the jangling, pleated pants, the purple,
oversized cardigan sweaters (this is 1989), and when his scent
on me locks so good that
he is my shadow, my brother,
Bobby goes to work.
You'd be amazed how quick this small
very white boy with a keg or two of hairspray
could stuff a backpack to the hilt, his little hands
a flurry like an angel's wings. Me and my shadow
at the store's far end. All these years
I'd thought us a small knife in the man's gut. I'd thought
we'd overcome, me and Bobby, Bobby
and me—though Bobby never stole anything
my size, and drove home in a convertible
while I waited—as did, sometimes,
my shadow—for the bus
to take us home.