eclipse
By Brenna Koester

‘eclipse’ means abandonment
they gave the killers weapons
they gave us an empty promise
and now the dragon swallows the sun —
totality

darkness
  falls
  over
  my
  kindergarten classroom.

a lockdown is an eclipse
an alien world of twilight
where my heart beats a little too fast —
the static of the sun’s song.

my classmates wait for the light.
we hold our
  breath.

i must cling to these words

[[this is a drill.]]
ghost stories
i remember telling my mom/one day in first grade/that when we had lockdown drills/the feeling of fear wouldn't leave me for hours/unease made a home in my chest those days/and twilight cast long shadows/i guess/back then/i thought that my fear was something irrational/like ghosts in the white of my t-shirts and an alien abduction when my mom took out the trash/i thought it was something to get over/i thought the killers couldn't find me/i thought when i got older i’d no longer/be afraid.
now
i live in a world void of the sun
yet i still fear the dark.
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on a cold spring day in two thousand eighteen/i stood vigil for seventeen minutes/to mourn seventeen lives/if i could dedicate a minute to every life lost that way/i might never move from under that flagpole/dented silver/in the snow/the flag was supposed to be something to take pride in but/ that day it seemed to be a sort of grave marker/sixty seconds passed by/a new minute began/and i wondered whose life i was mourning.
the teacher
covers the windows on the door
with black paper
like my finger
covers the sun
and then we wait.
freshman year
and earlier this week/when i sat/against the wall/shoulder to shoulder with my classmates/closer/kind of/than we’d ever been before/i thought i wasn’t scared anymore/but when the door handle shook/i realized the fear was still there/and my friend said/what if it wasn’t a drill