Horror in the Dairy Aisle

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Horror in the Dairy Aisle
By Phoebe Thatcher

A cut tube, a Freon leak - a fortune in freezers (says my manager) destroyed overnight.
Of course I am the one in the stiff polo shirt and dampened Target loafers, running a blackened mop over the swollen hills of ruined linoleum, all day and into the night, when the yellowgreen lights flicker on like hesitant bioluminescent beetles and I am alone and cold in the dairy aisle.

The promised repair truck does not arrive. Never throw away what isn’t expired (says my manager); no one in the Greater Glenleaf Crossing Township cares how long their Chobani yoghurt has been lying in wait;
The containers are all stiff to the touch, turgid with some dark, pulsing thing -
and after lights-out on the sixth night, one by one, with quiet pops, they rupture like eggs.

Rhonda and I watch the security camera footage  

I

having awakened, the young must seek nourishment white syrup drooling down the side of the gutted freezers defenseless in their larval form, they must grow quickly - or die bristles of turquoise erupting in bouquets, a mossy floor of mold by Monday morning, borne of the same litter, they are all much alike and all hungry - and more colonizing the whiteplaster walls like a patina.
after their long dormancy, they will eat anything in their way.

II

End it (says my manager) - I upend two bottles of bleach and, sheathed in white spores, give up.
I come in on Wednesday and the lights are off. The doors erratically open and close like the jaws of a dying thing;
the parking lot is empty, a thin trail of turquoise blossoms in the cracks of the asphalt.

III

IV

on our lunch break, like Animal Planet: