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Social anxiety

Judgmental glares
 follow every turning head
 as my name is called
 Loud and clear.
 It leaves my ears ringing
 & my legs go weak.
 But I make an effort.

Somehow i stand,
 and walk towards the stage.
 Right now, my heart desires to shatter my ribs
 And escape into a black hole
 Its beats, loud and fast
 must be audible to the whole room
 My demons are having a laugh right now
 They mock at my audacity for even showing up
 Each bone in my body is cursing me
 And begging me to take off
 Take flight
 Fade
 Disappear

The voices begin again
 "I am embarrassing myself"
 "They're all better than me"
 "I don't have what it takes"
 "I am inadequate"

Again, I make an effort.
 Standing on the stage,
 I take deep breaths
 And fill my struggling lungs
 with much needed oxygen.
 I raise my eyes and go through
 The known and unknown faces in the crowd
 They all look like judgmental robots

Again, I make an effort
 I try to produce a sound
 through my quivering lips.
 It's hard to utter complete sentences

while looking at them.
I lower my head and speak to the ground,
opening and closing my perspiring fists.
It's easier like this.

Occasionally I lift my head
only to welcome a new rush of adrenaline.
It's hard to let go of my social anxiety
since it doesn't let go of me.
It has become integral to me
like the color of my skin.

In this cold room full of masses,
I long for the warmth and comfort of my four walled room.
My safe haven
Where I don't have to make one effort after another
Where I am not surrounded by these judgmental faces
Where I do not embarrass myself
Where there is no one better than me
Where I do not worry about my inadequacy
Where I have what it takes.