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ENG 406 – Flash Fiction
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Josiah headed out early in the morning for a jog before the sun had even come up. The neighborhood was cloaked in a mysterious blue-gray light. Streetlights were losing their importance and relevance. Dew had dusted the perfectly trimmed lawns in front of the endless rows of cloned houses. Josiah was shivering at first but gradually moved past it as his jog continued. This morning he was wearing long johns under shorts, an undershirt under a sweatshirt, and socks under shoes. He generally tried to have socks under his shoes.

Then the barking started. At first he was just barely aware of the noise coming from beyond his headphones, but it grew in intensity. They sounded vicious. They wanted his blood, he knew it.

Josiah gulped and tried to look straight ahead as he continued jogging. He had dreamt the previous night that giant black dogs were chasing him down a shadowy street and toward a dark red horizon. Perhaps it was all the soviet propaganda he had been researching for the class he taught, or maybe it was just a deep subconscious fear of the canine breed. He wasn't generally afraid of dogs when he saw them – he'd even had a dog growing up! - but something was different about this morning. They seemed to be coming from everywhere.

The barking was intensifying. Josiah gritted his teeth and started to run faster, his aged sneakers patting against the perfect pavement. He could feel them approaching. There was no doubt that they were coming down every side street. The sun was still not up. If only it would come up in time to save him!

He saw their shadows out of his peripheral vision. The shadows were cast from the streetlamps and stretched out toward him, threatening to pin him and hold him until their creators arrived. They were almost upon him. He could feel breaths of air against his ankles.

“Hey mister, move out of the way!”

Josiah was so startled by the voice that he tripped and fell onto the sidewalk.

“Watch it, buddy!”

Josiah looked up in a daze from where he accidentally lay sprawled.

Hordes of Chihuahuas dressed in assorted colored sweaters scurried down the center of the street, barking wildly. Dozens of middle-aged people rode bicycles silently on either side of the road, keeping the little dogs contained.

“What is going on here?” Josiah stammered to a woman as she began to slowly come toward him on her bike.

“What's going on?? It's the great Chihuahua race!” she smiled, getting closer to where he lay. “It showcases the finest area poodles, and there are lots of prizes for the winners. Also...well...sorry, we're not supposed to talk during this. Already enough noise pollution, they say. Anyway, wish me luck, I'm rooting on number 44! My little poopsie, that one. See ya!”

Josiah was speechless for a few moments as she rode past.
“Chihuahua’s...” he finally muttered to himself while hanging his head. “I’m an idiot.”