

Alexis Green

AJAX

Fred Hammond snatches me out
of my dreams, and I know I only have
a few minutes to pretend I'm still sleeping.

The morning sun adjusts her bonnet
and slaps the crust out of my eyes.
Still, I treat these covers like a cloak
of invisibility.

My name turns to siren, as my mother's
voice breaks through the music,
and the silence after this summons
drags my body into the living room.

We get our assignments
and, coming to terms with the fact that
I have bathroom, I almost have the mind
to flush myself down the toilet.

After marinating the tub in Scrubbing
Bubbles, dreary eyed and smothered
in Ajax, I allow the sponge use my
muscle memory to feed itself.

While in the company of Lysol, Windex,
and Clorox, I'm enamored by their
beautifully lethal scent—because what is love
if it doesn't run the risk of killing you.

Their aroma becomes the heaven
of outcomes: I'll either see the pearly gates
of my mother's satisfaction or I'll pass out
and be taken to the king sized bed.

I slip up and start to groove
to the *melodies from heaven*, before
I rebuke these shoulders—out of loyalty

to my unjustly interrupted dreams.

I swear, right after this, I'm going back
to sleep! So, I finally throw away my last
paper towel, twist the last cap,
and turn off the water.

I run into the arms of my unrequited
love, bury myself in it's pillows and under
it's sheets. I gently drop my eyelids

...but the ghost of Pine Sol keeps me awake.