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Out of Place

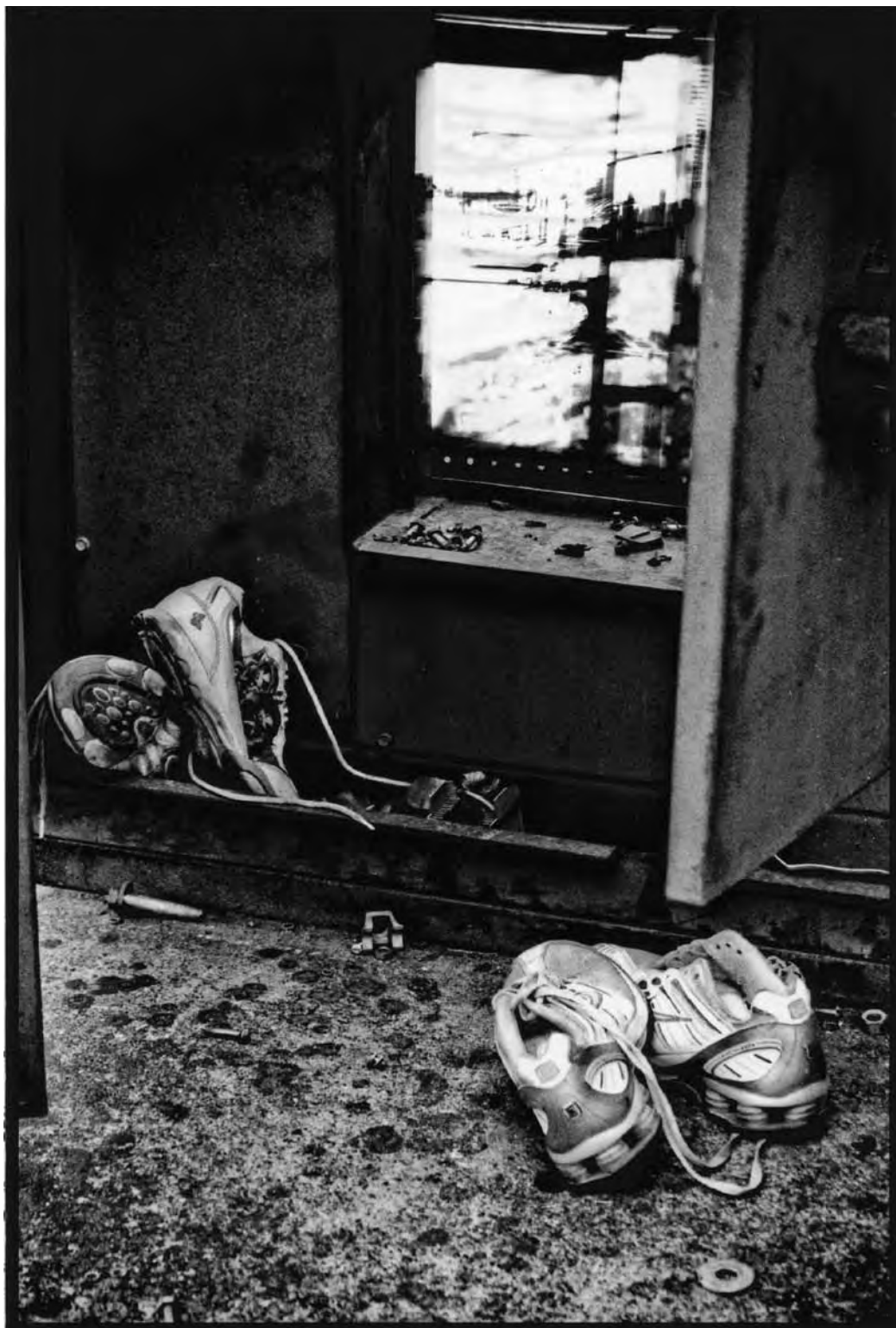
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Out of Place Essie P. Graham

I Don't Know

Brian Fennig

Step into the cold and walk.
Old shoes crunch on a ground of frozen grass.
My body moves quickly but my still life bleeds
and the only difference between you and me

is two miles and a station wagon ride.
A.M. radio is loud with words that I will never really hear
and news of where I'm supposed to be
but I don't know.

So I walk and inhale and walk
toward a building with identical rooms
where having a name is just an invitation
to sit in a blue plastic chair and maintain a gaze

that lasts for only a few hours
but not quite short enough to escape
tall women with brown wigs who scuff white tile with short heeled black shoes
as I swagger from room to room with extended strides that say I don't know.

Valium picks up where closing doors in B-hall leave off.
My head is down in algebra.
A bell moves my mind.
I wake and leave.

I walk home to the tune of weed-eater kazoos spinning through grass
and city bus tires percussion on streets
where I can't see the traffic for the cars
and I want to get home.

I step into a house and through a door and into darkness
where I might see Mrs. Havisham
but find the familiarity of silence, absence
and solitude that I do know very well.