

IMAGE OF A WOMAN ALONG A SIDEWALK



Image: “Untold Stories” by Judith Fox. “Image of a Woman Along a Sidewalk” was written by Jason Brunner for *Rattle*’s Ekphrastic Challenge, June 2023, and selected as the Editor’s Choice.

poem by Jason Brunner

“She’s too pretty to be missing,”
my father said as we walked past the poster,

in that offhanded way that made my cheek twitch.
I wondered what malady made him say it—

maybe an old fleck of lead paint had lodged itself
in just the right part of his brain,

or he was choking on his own Adam’s apple
and didn’t think to cover his mouth.

Not ten steps into my speculation,
he stopped to talk to a shop owner

who was installing new locks on her door,
and she gestured across the street

to a vape shop with a plastic tarp
taped over its missing center pane.

It shuddered in the wind
with the same enthusiasm

as a sheet of glass in the moment
that a rock strikes it, and it shatters.