

# For the girl who had a snake in her apartment last night

Poetry — Alice Tyszka

Were your hands shaking as you held  
the wood of an old brown broom and heard  
the sound of bristles against  
your apartment's worn-down tile?

When you saw that movement in the corner of  
your eye, was your first guess a  
snake?

I'd imagine you turned to a friend and asked  
what was that? as the unsuspecting visitor  
wearing a faint orange coat appeared  
and left you out of your damn mind.

Still startled this morning, and without your coffee  
you are stuck with left-over shock to swallow  
Over something that made  
your silent heart race loudly  
                  so loudly you could hear it  
in your ears  
and your head  
felt the vibrations

When your friend opened the door  
and you shooed the long squiggling line away,  
how grateful were you?

Did you simply sigh and thank God?  
Or were you trying to quiet your mind,  
which hissed with like the slithering reptile? (Maybe change "with" to  
"like")

Could you hide the fear from your eyes when you saw his,  
and that tongue forked in two?

You smiled with the crowd as you all held carrot-colored coffee cups.  
Warm, unlike the blood of last night's companion guest (Maybe guest/visitor instead of companion)  
and such a similar shade of orange  
to the "beast" that was let in.

You and your table all take sips,  
and they ask if you'll ever recover.  
I nearly spit out my tea, knowing  
I had been considering the same thing.

Except – I wondered if the light orange  
guest who greeted you all (I would delete all and just have "you", makes sense as a plural)  
Just wanted to join in on the fun.  
Had he liked the movie that was playing?  
The soft maroon couches or the popcorn?

Or had he just taken  
A wrong turn  
on his way home

Only to have his face hit  
With a broom  
Over and over  
and over again.

Until he departed.  
And you, nearly unable to stand,  
sent him to different land.

How will you recover?

How will he recover?  
For this was his home,  
and we've all built right over it.