

## Wake Up

**prompt: use the starting sentence from another work**

**Opening sentence: "The Slap" Stephen Millhauser**

**May 30, 2019**

"One September evening when Walter Lasher returned from the city after a hard day's work and was walking to his car in the station parking lot, a man stepped out from between two cars, walked up to him, and slapped him hard in the face."

"You need to wake up", said the man, without apology.

Yet Walter was furious, as most are when greeted with an open palm.

"Well, hello to you too". He cussed, then rubbed his smarting jaw. *So that's going to leave a mark, when I wake up this morning*, Walter thought to himself.

There was something familiar, about this man with no face, but Walter brushed these notions aside. He was tired and needed to get to work. Today is a busy day, an important presentation, gotta impress the boss, and get that raise. But now, in his way, this obstacle of a man.

"What do you want?" Walter questioned, "Money? I haven't got much", as he fumbled with the wallet in his hands.

"Mr. Lasher, wake up!"---the reply.

*Wake up? What a strange notion. Must have been day-dreaming, not much else to do in traffic.* Cars lined up for miles, impatiently waiting to get to a different somewhere. Walter pulled down his mirror, and checked his teeth. Breakfast had

been a spinach omelet. His teeth smiled back, perfectly white, recently brushed. Yet across his jaw---*a purple blemish?*---the start of a nasty bruise.

Walter began to rehearse his speech. Practice makes perfect and public presentation had always been a phobia of his. *Remember to slow down, pace yourself. Deep calming breaths, just like you practiced.*

"I think he's coming around", said some voice, far away.

But Walter ignored it. The sun had gotten into his eyes, forcing him to squint. He reached for his sunglasses, a mile away, on the dash. And then the sun shifted, jumped from his eyes to the right. "Pupils are responding to light", he heard as his vision began to clear.

"Wha? What happened?"

"You fainted!" replied the faceless man, now his boss, "gave us a bit of a scare".

*Fantastic.*