Clocking Out: Empty Strollers in Lviv Square

(after Emily Dickinson’s “It feels a shame to be alive” - F524A)

Al Salehi

The day they died,
there was no mid-night,
for who could sense
the halfway point?

We cried,
as the stars shone darkly.
The moon was full,
but eclipsed by mourning.

Polaris,
the “North Star,”
lay cloaked behind lead-lined clouds
of gunsmoke; embarrassed

that it may
encompass false hope.
That night, Silence filled
the absence of Time,

as the Hours
called in sick
from their positions
on the clock.¹

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¹ Empty strollers sit in a Lviv square (Ukraine), representing children killed in the war it has endured with Russia in 2022.