Getting Mighty Crowded

David Kresh
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The preacher squats hidden in the shadow of the Big Boy Washer.
His hands float and flutter in a swan dance of invocation.
His face waits, smooth, blind.

The naked man moves his encampment from washer to drier.
The quarter falls from his fingers.
He tries to remember how to say "Damn!"
I wish I could help him.
He bends toward the quarter for a while.
Then he stands up for a while.

The preacher has been leaving warnings everywhere, that he will be happy,
that there will be fire,
he has spoken solemnly of the inevitable advent
of cannibalism. You can see that, can't you.

One by one everyone respectfully takes a cigarette from the naked man's pack. He frowns, "please help yourselves" he wants to remember how to say.
The pieces of the naked man,
his grooming, his desire
for the right word,
his beautiful manners, his
fingers at the edge of the quarter,
I wish I could help him.

From the pay phone Hakim
calls the radio doctor
of psychic science for confirmation of
his mission on earth. She says
he will either meet or be
a tall, dark stranger. "Now
what was your other question, honey"
she titters, "I forget." Is the messiah
already on earth? She giggles. "No, no."

The naked man brushes his
fingers across the edge of the quarter.
Then he stands up for a while.

The Big Boy plainly says
DO NOT OPEN DOOR
UNTIL CYCLE HAS COMPLETED
but the preacher is prodded and driven now
from his warm corner, comes to his feet
preaching, that devil, that
devil, they despise him.

He flies almost falling fast past me.
Such changes flash fire across his eyes that
I turn away.

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