

Broken News

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Last night I went to a broadcasters' awards dinner
where a woman in a silver sequined dress
announced a local station's prize
for Best Breaking News Story of the year.
They won for their coverage of a school shooting,
and the headline flashed in boxy white letters
on a massive screen:
"STUDENTS KILLED IN OXFORD."

As the woman waited to hand off the award,
a DJ raised the volume of a party track by Bruno Mars,
and I watched the silver sequins
dance in green and purple light
while the woman shimmered and smiled on stage.

Similar scenarios played out all night:
Blighted homes and Pharell
Food insecurity and Ke\$ha
Tornados and "Good Times" by Chic

I wanted to cry
and laugh
and vomit
all at once,
at this broken night
this broken room
this broken news.

But instead I just sat there and waited to leave.

Aftwards, I went dumpster diving
and with my headlamp and rubber boots,
I found oranges and raspberry preserves.
I chewed spearmint gum
while loading the boxes into my car
and felt cleaner than I had all night.

runner