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NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV BUYS SHEETS

Nancy Thompson

Though one were to live a hundred years without
seeing the rise and passing of things, the life of a single
day is better if one sees the rise and passing of things.

Dhammapada (113)

Still unable to bear the thought
of king or queen,
he chooses full,
dreams of bigger;

contemplates Egyptian
cotton, finally lifts
a lock-step knit.
He checks the label—

Made in China—
snubs the red,
selects an inexplicable check.

Just for a moment, he wishes
he could have it all back—
Sputnik, the Berlin Wall,
all the glorious subterfuge . . .

Maybe, he thinks,
he should buy
a comforter, too.
He fingers the fabric.
Too soft, he reckons,
sliding pillowcases
toward the register. Too soft.