

All Hallows' Eve, NYC, 2017

by [Emily Rose Proctor](#)

October 31, 2023

High on sugar, ebullient,
our children suffer
through the last hours
of school, so many monsters,
masked, fake blood trickling
from the corners of their mouths.
The city—nation—pretends
for hours, sometimes days at a time,
that evil isn't real, that it isn't
at this very moment cloaked
in righteousness, climbing
into a rented truck, repeating
misappropriated incantations, justifying
what it is about to do. Tomorrow
bells will toll for eight more souls,
unwitting martyrs—only two American.
This is no holiday stunt, orchestrated
for the benefit of early trick-or-treaters
or the antsy Stuyvesant students about to be
dismissed. The street will soon be littered
with bicycle shrapnel, scribbled notes
praising the God of ninety-nine names,
the sheet-draped bodies, alternately lit
a pallid red and blue.