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I Own the Road

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I Own the Road

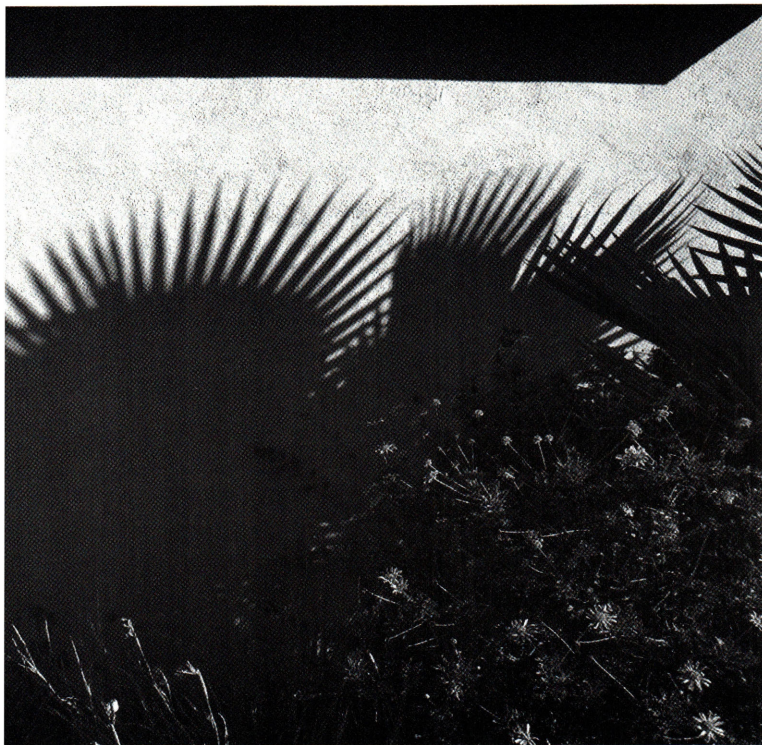
Nakita Vojnovich

**Sloping, a tar-drizzled court, shoddy as
an excuse for craftsmanship, my road descends** like a

concrete trail. You can stand at the top, right next to that weird blue fire hydrant, and watch, gazing over the rooftops of the houses below, as the elder bois d'arc trees stir and sway and wave in the wind, nymphs' hands painting the oranges and purples of the setting sun. It's not like standing at the edge of a cliff, but upon the crest of a wave, revealing a hidden Atlantic community as it recedes from the shore. Trees planted near to the curb lend a portal of

shade; a few badly-pruned crepe myrtles twang like brambles of ocean foliage, contributing nothing but a reason to chuckle at my neighbor's green-thumbed finesse. I remember relating to my mom that I felt like the sky could just suck me off the face of the earth, right there. Into the heavens of that fleecy global expanse I'd vaporize, and I'd touch everything the horizon touches: a dusty golden infinity.

"They say the Texas sky is the most awe-inspiring," my mom had replied, acknowledging its depth briefly, but she didn't understand. She didn't understand, and the words I could have supplied lacked the ballooning that natural wonder asphyxiates you with, so together we started down the road again, ambling quietly to our home.



SHARP SHADOWS James G. Robinson

Dusk is slow in July. The sun and moon converse like benevolent neighbors, and the cicadas and crickets orchestrate a diverse lullaby. Fairies come out for my sixty-something year old neighbor, and the fragile woman, who could be a pixie herself, tiptoes through her front yard toward a glittered bird house that reads, "I do believe!" Rocket, the black cat that's died twice, trots across lawns, meowing, until finally reaching me where I lay sprawled on my back in the middle of the street. The concrete is toasty, and I turn my face so that my ear melts on its surface. Humid air stirs, pushing nothing but the unique aroma of summer—fresh-cut grass from somewhere on the block, coconut SPF lingering on my own skin, mesquite charcoal cooking my dinner in the back yard... dimples poke themselves places at the corners of my mouth, and I can't help but grin openly.

Roads see everything, I realize, everybody, everyday. This road is a timeline of my life, the only one that has been here as long as I. Thinking of it automatically sounds-off the nostalgic brass of my brain, and the road fittingly becomes my own 'memory-lane.' Peace finds me here, and I feel more connected with nature than I would any other place in the world; I just hope one of my neighbors doesn't run over me.

An airplane streaks across the sky, leaving a trail of emission that looks like a rapier. I lie there long enough to see it clash with another, and I realize the lightning bugs are beginning their part in the nightly ritual. Soon the stars will bedazzle a navy tapestry above me, and then Dad will come out and ask me, "What the hell are you doing lying in the road?"

Private Thoughts

David Knappe

Everyone has a place
inside them
where they hold their
most private thoughts
like marbles in a tin

collected there
to look at in private
when doors are closed
no one is looking

hold them up to the light
feel their hardness
coldness
the heaviness
of their weight

quickly
put them back inside you

close the lid
hide them away
before someone finds them
and pours them out

scattering them
like marbles across the floor.