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Natural Release

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NATURAL RELEASE, CONNECTICUT 1999

by Lisa Favicchia

In the quiet of a street shaded by an invasive species, beautiful
except for its slow strangle of trees you once believed
was an embrace, on a day well over 100 degrees, a slow, belly scorch,
just outside of the house you were sure had been abandoned,
reclaimed by nature many years ago except for the guttural sounds
you occasionally heard coming from that direction if you stood
at the very edge of the woods in the far end of your yard, the flash
of yellow T-shirt you sometimes saw and ignored in favor
of abandonedness,
the house your parents complained had never been painted
correctly, one side
left a peely beige—but it didn't matter because the dingy,
not-quite blue
was unsightly anyways—the house the school bus stopped at
sometimes (you noticed when your parents drove you in
the mornings)—
it was outside of that house and on that day that your dad
pulled over
suddenly, asking you what was that, but you couldn't see anything
over the plastic window brim, so you got out, he encouraged you,
and there it was;
stomach muscles rippling along the pavement through heat haze,
the five foot boa constrictor, head confused but scales reflecting
the light as they should, a distinct caramel pattern—Sometimes,

even now you still see that ghost boa, your head turned over
your shoulder
as you're pulled back into the car, pushing itself over the
scorched curb
eventually disappearing into wild overgrowth as your eyes
are once again eclipsed by the brim of the window.