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Natural Release

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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.