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## Mirage

Steve Jackson

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# Mirage

*Steve Jackson*

At first there was nothing but white lines  
to hyphenate the road,  
with the next word of pavement  
never quite coming.

On the inch wide  
void between wilderness and civilization  
pieces of amber beer-bottle glass  
on the yellow ochre weed fringe  
stretch to the west where vermilion eye of God  
slowly surrenders to the violet-brown mountain.

As a violent wind whips garbage  
up against the hands of wire fence,  
tumbleweeds dance along and I can feel  
the first gush of cool wind whistle  
through my wheels  
as they roll over a scarlet strain of wild blood—  
a red police chalk line silhouetting  
the body at the scene of the crime.

A mangled, spotted heap in the barrow pit,  
it rests, waits, holding still like it was taught;  
silent fawn's eyes stare at shiny shards of glass,  
wary of danger it need no more fear.

I hear only my tires whine, I feel only the front-end  
right side shimmy that keeps my hand on the wheel,  
And I see only up ahead billboards  
that try to establish dominance for my eye: cafe,  
gas, good food, clean rooms, trucks, last chance.

On the sidelines, in the bull-pen, big diesels  
cough and grumble as they wait for repairs—  
soon they'll roar past me in a flash  
of wheels and windshield wiper streaks  
and then I will know what it is to be small.

Above white lines, on the horizon, clouds  
post sentry for shafts of white light  
and on the darker distant mountain  
fire-lightning takes Jacob's Ladder-cracks  
at the charged earth.

No rain yet, only one large cloud  
menaces, builds, moves, then cracks and the sky  
unfolds into sheets of water that cover the road  
with a wet skin.

The asphalt shines quickly, the rain stops, and light  
shafts once again spear their favorite plot of land  
as the eye of God  
slips more quietly behind the jagged mountain.  
Back down the road, past the dirty truck stops  
and tumbleweeds and rivulets of water the blood

has been washed off the road;  
now there are no clues, only shiny shards of glass.

