

Golden Shovel

after William Carlos Williams

Our neighborhood of stolen bikes, backyards, and so-called conditions of standard living (where nothing was much), Papa would drive up, reverse, and parallel into his spot like the spot depends on the smoothness of his return. Wednesdays upon the red brick column we leaned, porch heavy and lethargic like a scene to be duplicated the next week. I would eyeball the red brick weighed between brothers, brushstroke my hands over the worn flaws. And a wheel, accompanied by other wheels, would always come to a halt whenever a child would barrow across the one-way like he was tethered to a friend or a loose ball glazed in bacon grease and popcorn oil. Sometimes those headlights froze on a naked dime without renaming a street, avenue, or lane, but too often they did not. Rain was the usual culprit fingered in a series of lineups. Ice water, the other that shot mothers out of starting blocks, Jackie-Joyner-Kersey beside their child lying broken in the road. From our red brick America, this was our rerun, our white picket fence, our Wednesday evenings Papa made it home, jivin' he saw a man about a duck.