

The Palms

The highway was gray and empty, the only sound the low hum of the asphalt beneath our tires. On the opposite shoulder of the road, a body lay sprawled, face-down and still, skin pale in the cool shadows of the trees. I looked up at the sky, at two thunderheads, soft and silver, and watched the sun slip slowly between them. Streams of light spread like fingers, and the whole sun was visible, warm and perfectly round. I thought, *Maybe that's what dying is like, to pass warmly from one place to another, to slide in hushed silence into the beyond.* I hoped that this is how it had happened, in the still shade of the palms.