

## ON ESCAPING

I slam through the gap in the stucco wall  
scraped away by the boy  
whose last salutation still crackles in my pocket.

He left in a gauzy dress.  
Those lace curtains his grandmother dusted  
with her scent.

Her last anniversary alone,  
she left the kitchen echoing with old love songs:  
teakettle whistling the end of a ghost tune.

In the note he told me she stumbled through her window,  
though whether she held a lightly-packed suitcase  
or a death wish he'll never know.

They pinned their gazes to the horizon and started over,  
ran over their old lives with a beat, old  
pickup and just kept going.

I trace my fingers over the silk doily stain  
left in the asphalt and kick myself into fifth gear,  
run until I've worn my shoes full of holes.

My feet in tatters, leave them behind,  
leave my breath if it refuses to be caught,  
let it curl up in the steam of melting rubber.

A burst of splinters and I'm through.  
In the second-hand daylight a kitchen  
I know by heart:

My cousins precariously propped on the counter  
each chewing on the heel of a day-old baguette,  
a reminder to finish what we've started.