

May Day

I walk out into a humid morning, my hand
curled around the rim of the skateboard. I hear
my mother's voice on Miss Ellen's porch. She's
chatting, hand pinching a cigarette thrown back
in the air, la-dee-da. She's been there for an hour or so.
I look over as I lock the door that is no longer hers
and wonder why she hasn't knocked at our house first.
"Hi, Mom," I say, across houses and years. She turns
and begins to answer, "Hi Hon--" as I drop four steps
off the top of the porch and land bang on the sidewalk,
click-clack seven squares to the curb, pop an ollie
onto the asphalt where she pulled away in her
rust-orange Datsun on May Day three years back.
I carve right, hard, wheels sliding, and haul ass
down the street, shoving the earth away with each push,
spinning the planet faster in reverse with each kick, raging
time backwards like Superman, to right before the sky
over me turned tornado green, and I understood at ten,
the end of love, the wreck of family, the limits of God.
Wheels growling beneath me, I roll away from her
into that summer's nuclear-winter fallout drift,
that long, slow, steady Geiger-counter tick of hurt.

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