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Joan Colby

Country Roads

Skid marks of midnight teens
Peeling rubber to snakes of standoff
Between the hot new license
Of time and domination.

Roadkill collages: splashed
Squirrel, chiaroscuro of skunk
Steeped in the perfume of destruction,
A spotted dog caught in the instant
Of joyous dash signed by Goodyear.

The joggers, grim with determination,

Knees pumping the aquifers
Of energy deep in muscle, eyes intent
On the crest of the hills,
Ears bookended with private music.

Sunlit mirages on blacktop
That disappear as wheels expose
The infernal illusion that thirsts
For revelation.

The Dry Lot

Since the last horse died, the dry lot stands empty.
A bobcat drinks from the water tank.
The orange cat stares from a barn window
At the forbidden birds.
I no longer ride up the little swell
To the woodlot where whitetails shelter.
Who'd have guessed I would ever
Walk this slowly, watching each step.
The fence enclosing the dry lot
Is slowly collapsing. Dry rot eats
The posts since creosote was banished.
The ghosts of mares and foals
Lean upon the top rails. The old oaks lean
Upon the barn roof, its shingles gone
Mossy as recollection. Overhead, hawks
Circle. The barn door creaks reluctant
As the synapses of the aged
Catching and losing a thought the way
Swallows dive at mayflies. The ground
That thirsted with hoofprints
Is overrun with violets.

Joan Colby's poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Gargoyle*, *Pinyon*, *Spillway*, *Little Patuxent Review* and elsewhere. Her poems and poetry collections have won numerous awards, including the 2013 FutureCycle Prize for her *Selected Poems*. Her most recent collections are *Carnival* and *The Seven Heavenly Virtues*. Her website is joancolby.com.