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You Must Drive to Phoenix

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YOU MUST DRIVE TO PHOENIX

I'm sorry. Turn off your air conditioner. I know it's humid and the drivers are angry. Roll down a window, remove the face plate of your radio and throw it into a canal. Talk radio won't help you now. There is a way to understand one wild secret: I'm asking you to sleep

in a vacant lot in the center of a city. To rest on the belly of wilderness, you have to lie on bull-head thorns that poke through a dead softball diamond. Find

a field where cotton and alfalfa won't grow, no matter how much water is pressed down upon them. Only a backstop twists and rusts where sports and grass failed. In a hall of the San Carlos Hotel, refer to an areal picture of this place. It shows the faintly dug creases of the Hohokam who grew corn and tepary beans. You must sleep where their water wouldn't cross, a small dry square between mountains. Canals still give it a wide berth, like cattle who tear their hides in cat-claw acacia at the shake of a rattle. You have

only a rusty backdrop and a raggedy pomegranate tree to go on, but don't sleep near these characters. They are bad companions, false ambassadors, visitors like yourself. They have worn their welcome to rust and tattered fruit. Ants make better bed fellows. Watch the swifts

perch in the holes when the metal cools
at dusk. An elf owl will make a racket
blinking in the branches of moon-lit, gutted
pomegranates. Along an avenue, park
and lose your hubcaps. Leave your car unlocked,
and into a row of thick trees enter.