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## The Usual Landmarks

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## THE USUAL LANDMARKS

i.

The word motel is spelled out all across the country. Neon martinis tip in the darkness, the olive lights up bigger than your head. Electric red horses gallop in the infinite sweep of twelve hooves, six horses, red body treading red body. And there are a lot of vacancies, unused rooms with rough curtains hanging loose on the tread. The pools are open. Float across the rippled rectangle and push yourself, hand and foot, from edge to edge. Concrete poured into rectangles, leaves and dead frogs caught in the breathing filter of chlorine systems.

ii.

We stopped for go-carts last night. The wooden blonde standing three stories high on the side of the road forced us to consider trading the wide berth of the American car for a low, exposed engine, the pavement close to your cheek. Lady of the Fairway stood in the dusk, not minding the crab grass uncut around her heels. She held a gold car in her palm, a finger to her lips. She told us secrets and we took the next exit. At the window, the young one in his first job ever stamped a greasy car on our hands, sent us towards the throng of unsteady teenage boys. Men with working tans manned the loop. Back on the highway, the giant female with full wooden bosom went largely unnoticed. She stood in the weeds, a tawdry piece of Coney Island, lost in the middle country.

iii.

The track smelled of gasoline. The pedal moved like a wood block, a crude part in a crude machine. You took the corners with skill, finding your shortest route, while I swooped through the figure eights at my own slow time. The boys roared by, I kept up, I fell behind. The gravel was a close mix of pretty silver grains.

iv.

You pay for our room in the motel cottage marked *Office*. The woman in a plaid smock, a nurse's smock, leads us there. She carries a starched pile of sheets and rough towels. She says needless things so she can get a good look at us. It's you again. You have a face that makes people want to look, consider how you got that face anyhow. The martini tips blue machine light into the room. You have grown up in a field of stares.