Fall 1981

Feet

Quinton Duval

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Where I lived they painted footprints on the sidewalks. Where people had been hit jaywalking, a line of white shoes would take a few steps and suddenly stagger into the street and stop at the single white X.

Where does everyone go when they leave and forget to say a conventional goodbye? It doesn't take a genius to know you bury a big dressed-up piece of meat and later on you can look and see dirty clothes and a few bones.

This was the lesson for all of us to be careful and follow the rules. I never wanted my name signed with footprints and an X. Now, these new ones show up. They walk around all night looking for people they left behind.

Last spring, on a picnic supposed to renew what had gotten old and hateful, we saw a single print, a big one, in the center of a pasture. It was as if someone had taken a giant one-legged hop and landed once in the middle. Then we realized it was one of those soft spots in the earth where people go when they are tired and don't like each other anymore.