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Lonesome Road Blues

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Boyd White

LONESOME ROAD BLUES

Used condoms, beer bottles, wire, broken glass,
a girl's t-shirt torn and snagged in a tree.
Deserted roads lure dead diversions: grass
groping its way through the cracks, a dropped key
coughed up from the damp mud of a dank ditch.
See? Here, dried blood still paints a few fence posts,
and beneath the rotted railroad bridge which
shores up the darkness, a patrolman hopes
the battered body floating in the mist
isn't the Gann girl still missing for weeks.
Her boyfriend ignores the pain in his wrists
as handcuffed he stumbles down to the creek,
his eyes fixed, the tune he hums low and sad,
Going down the road feeling bad, bad, bad.

HELLHOUND ON MY TRAIL

Highway 61, Highway 49,
torn matchbook covers, cold cigarette stubs,
blood from his broken teeth leaking like wine,
he checks his face in the mirror, he rubs
his swollen jaw, a bad bruise blossoming
his young cheek where his head slammed hard into
the bathroom stall, the voice behind crowing,
"Never paid for it, never will. Would you?"
He gathers himself in his skinny arms,
buries his face in the sink deep, fingers
his pockets for spare change. He recalls barns,
bridges, safe spots to sleep. What else lingers?
Someone's breath. A faded name. Cold steel rail.
Got to keep movin', blues falling like hail.