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Wreaths

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KATHERINE E. YOUNG

Wreaths

Ring Road, Moscow, January 1995

Fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz

While wreaths are laid and speeches made
and politicians arrange to be seen
amid shrieking lights at the Wall
of Death, a man staggers out
across seven lanes to the center
of the road—dead center—and if
he stretches out his hands, his fingers
will touch the chrome and magic before
being torn off. Some private grief
makes him fall to his knees, swaying
gently, gently. But who has a soul
so great it holds all the world
within? Behind their windows, the drivers
stare and honk at him. I press
my palm to the glass of the tram before
moving on.