

KIRK, COMING DOWN

Here on highway 6, between my feet, they've marked with orange spray-paint, the spot where you landed. Down there, by the tall grass is where they say you were hit. The paper said the man driving just fell asleep for a moment, and your bike was clearly over on the shoulder. Now, it's just a matter of the settlement, no one's pressing charges. They've marked your departure point and where you came to rest, but in between: twenty-five feet of nothing but air and time.

One track meet in
Middleschool
I came out during the rain to watch
you jump.
It was cold
you stripped off
your sweats
down to nothing but your
tank-top and shorts.

Your shoes looked too heavy
swinging on the ends
of your long skinny legs
and you bounced them
on the runway
shifting your weight back
and forth.

You paced off your approach
for the last jump
marked a takeoff point
by placing a wet twig
at the end
of the crescent you
measured.

I stood as the rain became deafening
on the surface
of the nylon mat.

This'll be the last jump of the day coach said.

You hit the twig
and lifted up into the
rain

against a thousand
tiny droplets
stretching back, your arm
out
your eyes fierce
and peering back
over your shoulder.

Your torso snapped like a whip
making a loop
of your legs
that unfurled itself
an inch above the bar
and slung your
sneakers up and over.
Look at him fly
just look at him fly
and it seemed
like you'd never come down.

Then you did,
you cleared
the bar, hit the mat
and slid, sending a sheet
of thin rain arching like
tempered glass in front of our
eyes.