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## The Road Widow

Elizabeth Burk

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# The Road WIDOW

Elizabeth Burk

When you are gone  
each city you are in  
lights up like a red beacon,  
beckons like a neon sign,  
like Broadway dancers  
and go-go girls.  
I see bars, strangers, ex-wives,  
imagined worlds  
where you loved others  
and left, or were left behind.

My body tilts south where you  
have gone. I taste cane sugar,  
feel the wilting heat. I am  
surrounded by gnarled, weepy  
trees;  
ancient limbs reaching out  
over sultry swamps where the  
murky deep rises, merges with  
reflections of trees and sky.  
The phone rings—  
bereft of touch, our disembodied words  
crash against each other like marbles  
colliding, spinning  
into distant corners of context.

Now deep into another swamp, I tread  
carefully on slippery rocks;  
alligators glide by, silent,  
hyacinths float amid the water's debris;  
silvery tree stumps, glistening, erect,  
poke through still waters like cocked  
bayonets, awaiting your return.

