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Upon the Side of the Interstate

My twin hitchhikers, picked up in Virginia while on the way
back from New York, spiky blond and fleeing home,
kept me awake on the drive with their big Tampa plans.

First thinking it a plane above about to crash we pulled over,
sleepy cows suddenly galloping away from the falling star
only to turn and watch with us, its smoke filling our faces.

We were all 19 and witnessing our first Florida miracle
as the blazing meteorite flung past ready to dive
into the wintery green field, eager to be done.

How fast, how direct it came
how frozen each spin how deep it went
how I could see the earth reach up her arms

and take in this lost love, this diamond,
this prodigal sun. Her arms folded it in,
the dark pulse pounding our hearts.

The dog barking in the car, truck tires scratching off
the interstate feet away, as commuters
spilled coffee on their tired laps, now wide awake.

Here on the bottom lip of Orlando my hitchhikers,
terrified of their own trajectory, leapt the fence and ran
through the stony cows toward the bright furrow.

They stopped, they said, and backed away, because
there spilled a river of Florida fauna:
Palmetto bugs snakes weevils and spiders, all those that crawl

flowed from the hole and toward those Virginia boys.
We left when the TV cameras showed up, them not ready yet
to be seen, to know whether or not they're missed.

The ospreys took advantage though, as nature does
and feasted on the fleeing and careless creatures,
feeding their own spiky offspring as the morning took hold.

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