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## A Dozen Ways of Looking at the Pit on Boulevard

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Vaughn: A Dozen Ways of Looking at the Pit on Boulevard

**A  
DOZEN WAYS OF  
LOOKING AT  
THE PIT  
ON BOULEVARD**



**KEVIN  
VAUGHN**

**ATHENS, GEORGIA**

I.

It was burnished, red

& there was a bottom

& children.

When I stare long enough  
into the Pit.

I see children.

II.

Kudzu leaches the stream  
opposite the Pit,

but  
something hardy

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**Vaughn**

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Its vines leech  
& spirit the last particles  
of an industrial age.

Children once tumbled  
& splashed in the septic  
runoff from upstream  
& machinery above the Pit.

III.

I've heard told:

Some rock & roller  
bought the Pit  
to let the kudzu have its way.

& so reminded  
of its sprawl on his first album  
no other city may claim him.

IV.

Wading  
the Pit slices my knees, ankles  
& hip bones

but how else to gauge it  
for myself?

V.

The Pit knows:

What my heart rejects: Athens as a tongue too-foreign

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How everything kept happening.

Why we have become bosom friends  
When I came to leave.

Who stands here next.

VI.

Viewed by satellite,

the Pit  
is Boulevard's center  
& Boulevard the proper  
center of Athens.

VII.

The Pit & abyss kiss  
like cousins

(this is the South)

green  
sudden, jagged depth

with a pungent blossom

like grapes  
too long on the vine.

VII.

Overlooking the Pit

is a family

of vintage Volkswagens.

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IX.

Dear Pit,

Black folk called it the "Hot Corner"  
where dressed in their finest  
they spent Saturday nights joyful.

Now, young white women staff Hot Corner's  
old black man bars.

Wilson's Soul Food keeps odd hours  
& Morton Theater stands lonely.  
You swallow most of Athens, but  
you did not swallow Hot Corner.

X.

The man in the pick-up truck  
whose bed flies  
the American flag  
the flag of the Confederacy  
& the POW/MIA

drives past the Pit, but does not  
stop to look for clues  
for teeth, a femur—

XI.

The Pit comprehends the seasons:

Kudzu's thick fingers  
tender on the throat of Spring.

Swollen more by sticky air  
& Summer's dew.

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Autumn halts kudzu's crawl  
& garter snakes miss  
into their burrows  
at the loss of cover & sun.

Kudzu tangled:  
Swaths of gray  
in the dark hair  
of a woman aging—  
Winter.

## XII.

A distinctly Southern mistake—  
an imported assassin.  
Will the kudzu wither

the looks of white women  
when they clutch  
at my dark skin  
this far down Boulevard?