

WHY I RETURN TO WEST AVENUE, DRIVING DOWN THE STREET SLOW

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Everywhere I look is an eight ball and slanting green felt covered slate, the future I daydreamed, the bull I rode down to the river, the barrel over the falls, the length of a finger and a thumb, wrapped around a wrist. The way tape works.

Everything I taste is a heart, is the mother I would have killed, is the bed the girl burned, the eyes I closed and closed, the queen of spades, the card of the sun, is what I turned over under the dark closet eyesight and the cigarette butt's glow. The skeleton baby brother I talked to in the toilet. The stories I wrote. There was the dancing in the bedroom and the baseball in the kitchen, the lamp I didn't break, the teeth that broke out, the home alone, the mother I saw cry, her resurrection, the stab, the way I hear everything. Don't listen. Don't listen. Don't leave well enough alone.

Everything my mouth reaches for is a blister, the arm of the candelabra that fell off when it got too hot and everything I don't hear is rosebuds in the bathtub with the clawed feet, the water too hot, how I keep taking my foot out and putting it back in, taking my foot out and putting it back in, the dial tone and deep breaths. How the cold bruises the lungs and the way the snow accumulates around a tire. How we dig. How we dig. The building next door that burned down, the black spot, the girl who drowned with flowers, the alphabet and elements taped to a wall, a tongue mouthing zinc, two palms, cupping a pink-yellow heart, steering a wheel, tasting sweet.