

MANATEES AND SWAMP RATS

TRAVIS
MOSSOTTI

Manatees and swamp rats; cypress feet, crawfish boils, homemade sausage from Bradley's General Store; hitchhikers stranded at boarded up gas stations; Spanish moss stippling the wind; southern drawls poured into a blues club, ordering up another language; more south; more crickets; more bonfires, flat tires, more oysters feasting on oil until your insides are ripe as black crude; duck wing, more hillbilly, glass bottom boat; panhandle lost its grip and grits and shrimp spill across the linoleum; well water gone sour with saltlicks; everything alive and dead leaking crystals; pythons gone wild; *y'aint from round her isya*, crossing the state line, unwinding time and spools of kudzu from the electric static of telephone poles and tadpoles swimming in the stillwater noon; horseflies, trilobites, I-75 to another country; the further south, the more north things become; retirement pleats; starched sheets and saltwater allergies; turn up the heat and burn down the trailer park; hurricanes, duct tape, cancer in the drainage water; let the kids play, take a roll in the hay; asphalt, wetland, tourism, tropicalism; show me a Waffle House and I'll show you a shotgun wedding; tobacco in the mouth, lockjaw, coleslaw, sunshine done spoiled the South.