- Skyway -

The girl sleeps,

head slumped against the passenger window of the blue Honda

rushing along the I-5 Skyway outside Samarra New York.

In the girl's dream:
she is in a bedroom,
in a composite house
pulled together from bits of
others
they've lived in;
the girl snatches up an
angel-figurine from the
nativity-set on the bureau
just before an arm, a
spectral arm,
sweeps the entire scene into
a garbage bag.
"We don't have time,"
says the disembodied

mother-like voice.

The blue Honda hits the railing; the girl is jolted up through dream-layers absently touching at the scar on her forehead, like she did, when she rode the Whirlygig ride at the County fair, last summer, the summer before they'd had to move again, in the middle of the night,

always, the middle of the night,

Outside the dream:

The blue Honda launches out of the southbound lane of the I-5 Skyway into the open space above treetops.

Earth and sky change places for the girl in the blue Honda, in a tumble, like laundry in the dryer air rushing in. Air,

across the cheek, Air, from an open window? Air from a missing door? "MOM?"

Hours later, against a blue dawn sky, at the gap in the railing where the car went over; State-Trooper Mallory will look down into the clump of shattered pine trees and mashed blue metal, that used to be a 1999 Honda Civic, (identifiable only by the name-plate on the trunk) and fill out his report.

The girl touching at that indelible scar, (her "central" defect) on her forehead, like she's crossing herself but she isn't crossing herself. she's flailing screaming or she thinks she's screaming, screaming in her mind. screaming in her heart. but hearts can't scream, can they?

Down the blue Honda rolls, & twists, through pine branches, disgorging its driver, enfolding its remaining passenger, as it slams into the night earth.

- I-5 -

4am, the median, below the I-5 in his Crown-Vic, Trooper Malory, his face illuminated, blue, by dashboard light.

Outside the wind draws up angry, sudden. A sound of metal ripping, t e a r i n g, an engine races to scream, wood shatters as if struck by canon fire.

Malory leaves his perch on the median lights & siren going. His heart pulsing behind his eyes, he approaches slow;

so as to avoid running over the injured? More likely a dullness of mind, from three drafts at the Skyway Grill.

One beer, "okay" but his shoulder ached; the tingle running down his arm. If only Wayne, the counter guy, hadn't kept refilling his damn mug.

He wills himself to think, to push on through the mental cloud bank and "proceeded to the North side of 390, where it crosses I-5 under the Skyway. . . "

An oak sheared in two; beneath it, the "probable" remains of a vehicle pulled apart into toffee-like strands.

All his seconds balloon to minutes; he trundles out of the car to climb the embankment to the disemboweled wreckage.

In the stillness, the steam tick-tick of liquid on a hot exhaust. What isn't be in Trooper Marlowe's report but should be:

the time taken to find "the mother," in tall grass convulsing, limbs expanding, mouth open blood-frothing;

inches above her open eyes; her head top, gone. He looks down into sightless eyes, she's looking through past him; he strains to picture the sequence

of events that put her at his feet. Over his shoulder, a girl, (or the "sense" of a girl) floating above, looking down.

He looks up, to see only winter night stars. He Leaves the woman in the tall grass, goes back to the wreckage

looks around, looks underneath, looks within. Beneath the car-roof curled like a blanket,

the remaining occupant, evidenced by a blood soaked knit cap with raccoon ears.

A hand emerges from under the blanket of metal, a girl's hand, small, open, extending to him.

He touches the palm, feels its warmth. The hand closes around his finger.