Soil Samples

There's a house at the corner, a house as yellow as the sky is tall. The sun makes you blink and you trip over the woven brick sidewalk the way a sad man opens a can of beans. Notice the house has a plaque on it. You look at the plaque but you do a double take. You aren't sure if the name is Robert or William or Roger. Consider all the names it isn’t. Walk and look down, let the name shred your thoughts. It says one of these but you aren't sure which.

A car sits in the driveway, thickly, like wood grain. Unfilled and unpaid, a parking violation tucks itself into the windscreen. The envelope presses the glass into discomfort, its color an inconclusive orange. Imagine the envelope and the name it contains but you aren’t sure which one.

As you walk, the pinky and ring finger of your left hand ferret themselves further into your pocket, believing violently in the depths beneath your feet, the house, the plaque. You walk and look down and trip over woven brick. The sidewalk buries a metaphor, crusting your eyes.

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Three men stand, loosely, in the half-shade of the yard behind an adobe house, pointing in no singular direction, kicking dirt and the air above it. Between them they wear a total of one shirt. The sun weighs more than hatred but tastes just the same. Plants confide to the sandy, salty, sloppy ground beneath the men’s feet. The yard came with the house, the way girlfriends come with ex-boyfriends, and the men want to fill it with distaste. You are one of them but identify more with the parched weeds between their toes.

Crushed vagrancy pokes, knowingly, from the soil. You think of the plants and your sweaty palms remind you, shakingly, of the moment with the plaque.

Feel the same as you did then. Feel the envelope enflamed by the name it contains, your eyes firing open through your skull. Your feet sink beneath the plants, beneath the brick, beneath the house, beneath the name. The moment rusts through your arms and knees and the yard assumes you dead, exhumed in the dirt, sweating.