

# The Very Short Story of Your Knuckles

MICHAEL TORRES

Or the bruised black mailbox  
before you left. I don't care to  
trace every absence, every avenue,  
that'll answer what  
went wrong. Instead let's start here:  
the car that came for you:  
I pictured a blue Civic, a passenger door's  
scrape. How easy escape seems. How an  
ache always asks for a window to look out  
of. Where did you see yourself? I  
memorized every corner your name  
covered.  
Your boneprints on tin and timber  
stamped like lonely tracks. Or tiny lake  
beds gasping at the sky.  
It was summer, let's say 2002, yes, the  
year I stopped being a boy despite my  
body, despite the bike  
I rode to witness the city wash your  
name to puddles. I stopped telling my  
mother who I was with all night. What  
drowned-out became a river called  
History.

No one to remember your address. Each street  
a sheet of bleach—reason to clip your mugshot  
from the paper like wings. To keep you from  
floating. When you returned, the trees said  
*bello,*

but couldn't tell which one of us you were. They  
said, *Prove it.* They swayed, *You can't be.* Tony,  
show them your hands.

Ask the mailbox to open its mouth, say  
*sorry* for knocking out a few teeth, for  
buckling its knees.

