

The Museum of Roadside Trash

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I pray to my grandmother
like others pray to god

because this world is cruel
especially for the littlest souls,

the ones littered across highways,
caught in the crossfire of busy Main Streets,

small tragedies unacknowledged
as their lives rush through them
like water.

And so I summon her
as I pass each lost squirrel and doe,
turtle, feral kitten, fox, and crow

and I imagine her stooped on the shoulder of the road
with her plaid shirt rolled to her forearms and
her blue polyester pants and moccasins
dirty with interstate grime

as she lays her palm upon their bellies
the way she used to wake me from afternoon naps,
until each one is whole and new again
and she can lead them home.

But sometimes I can't bear to see the wreckage
and I summon her magic too early

so instead of a lost creature,
I send her blown tires and baseball hats,
orphaned shoes and cardboard boxes,
broken sticks and fast-food cups and discarded
tee shirts

and I imagine her in *everwhere*,
the newest soul at her side,
surrounded by those animals
and her museum of roadside trash,

and I can almost *almost*
hear her laugh,
as electric as a hailstorm.