

Making A Fist

We forget that we are all dead men conversing with dead men.
—Jorge Luis Borges

For the first time, on the road north of Tampico,
I felt the life sliding out of me,
a drum in the desert, harder and harder to hear.
I was seven, I lay in the car
watching palm trees swirl a sickening pattern past the glass.
My stomach was a melon split wide inside my skin.

'How do you know if you are going to die?'
I begged my mother.
We had been traveling for days.
With strange confidence she answered,
'When you can no longer make a fist.'

Years later I smile to think of that journey,
the borders we must cross separately,
stamped with our unanswerable woes.
I who did not die, who am still living,
still lying in the backseat behind all my questions,
clenching and opening one small hand.

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