

# Illinois Route 3

by Justin Hamm

If this road could answer  
I would ask her what it is like  
to follow the path  
of the rippleshimmery river  
for too many miles  
through the slowly ghosting towns  
and the corncovered landscapes  
of the dying Midwest  
first through hills so subtle  
they seem like mere rumors  
and then through more  
significant undulations  
rising up suddenly  
like tumors— only to be abandoned  
completely spent and alone  
in some lesser Cairo  
long before you could ever tune  
your ear to the lovely blue notes  
of Memphis, Tennessee  
or feel the tingling creepies  
drifting out from the voodoo  
niches of New Orleans

I would kneel down right here  
where the darkness is thickest  
and hides the sign that warns  
*Danger: Falling Rock*  
and I would listen as the one  
tiny swath of pavement  
glowing brightest white  
under the sharp cuticle moon  
speaks of its great envy

and the river pageants past  
like so many onetime lovers  
all arrogant momentum  
all callous purpose  
without the slightest  
hint of hesitation

