

Tingles

by Mark Waldrop

Your steering wheel is hot.
You don't feel it though, I mean,
It tingles some but it doesn't have that crawling, stinging feeling
Like the way you'd feel it if they hadn't called.
Not the way other people in Arizona feel it.
You don't feel you or her or anything in between.

Driving toward Good Sam Hospital over a dry scarred desert road
There are other cars and you notice that they exist
But to you they're not really there.
Just like streetlights looming; they're not on.
They don't see you — you don't see them.
Everything is far away and dizzy, like waking up in a new place.
Like you've been drinking again but, you haven't.

Drinking might help.
It couldn't hurt, you think. It might hurt.

You decide to stop.
Nobody's going anywhere right now.
There's too much time in the world--

The checker looks at you with his eyebrows up.
Your shirt and forehead are ironed wrong and wrinkled.

In the car you take a sip of brandy, just one and
It tingles like the steering wheel sliding down
It spreads quickly from there
And you're back on the road.
Nobody's watching.

