

Matchbox Car

by Matt Kang

When I was eight, I used to have a red matchbox car. It had chrome accents and a plastic undercarriage. The body work was all dinged up from years of high-speed car crashes into various table legs. The decals of obscure oil companies were starting to scuff and flake off. All that notwithstanding, it had a cool shape and I liked the details. I took it with me wherever I went, holding it in my balled up fist so that no one could see it.

One day I crossed the street looking both ways but not bothering to look forward. I looked down at my feet when I walked back then—I thought that was the right way to go about things. My feet took me over a grate. Afraid I would lose the car, I gripped it as hard as I could. The red car, as if knowing, slipped from my sweaty palm and fell into one of the metal openings.

Clatters and clatters ensued, and the splash destroyed all denial. I stood there until a honk sent me running, my tears leaving a trail of wet blotches from the grate to wherever I wandered to afterward.

Sometimes I still think about the contours and colors of the car. I've tried to look for the car again in stores, but none of them were ever quite the same.

