**Intersections**

Daniel Pié

I finger-jab the dashboard presets, the decelerating traffic escaping my notice.

Each unchosen song descends into the musical abyss almost before it reaches my ears.

*I can name that tune in three notes*. The memory of the ’50s game show makes me smile. Dad and Mom on the couch, me and Sis sitting cross-legged at their feet, all staring at a grainy black and white screen that flips every few seconds.

Blood surges into my right leg like a monsoon rushing through a desert wash, triggering a panicked probe for the brake pedal. I don’t realize I’m holding my breath until my SUV safely melds into a slow roll to a stop. Eyes glance at the color signals that orchestrate this moment.

I squint through the filter of a high Arizona sun, pausing at a glint off a metallic-green pickup just ahead in the next lane. A descending tinted window fascinates.

A girl, no more than 4 or 5 years old, pokes her noggin through the window’s plane. Her perfectly round, olive face is a blank canvas of curiosity.

She has a great length of silken hair. Its shade is moonless midnight. Dense as deep space. A warm breeze blows most of it from her eyes. The rest is raked away with a single stroke of little splayed fingers.

Her chin tilts slightly upward. Eyelids momentarily flutter against the brightness. She welcomes the warmth, her senses ratcheting up.

A cornucopia of color envelopes her, from the signage on commercial structures to a tiny emerald weed sprouting from a fissure in the sidewalk. Her nostrils twitch at a waft of grilling beef.

Why does our fascination go the way of our muscle tone at the far end of a life? When do we cease to marvel at revelation? Better left, I conclude, to the likes of this beautiful, untarnished creature. Everything is ahead of her. All is full of promise.

The traffic light changes to green. An apparent voice I can’t hear calls to the little girl. A cautious parent?

Vehicles begin to inch forward. Pulling alongside the truck, my smile expands into a harvest moon.

When she notices me, she blushes in self-awareness. Then, perhaps judging my gaze an intrusion, she crosses her enormous black irises. Her index fingers tug at the corners of her lips, and she sticks out her tongue.

My last glimpse is of her giggling, and she disappears back into the darkness of the truck’s interior. Traffic and time recalibrate to normal speed. The tinted window closes the curtain on the rest of her life.