**The Move**

Lorrie Ness

The weedy paths between the trailers

brimmed with castoffs.

Every household donated to the supply

of feral children and broken bottles.

Nikki the dirt urchin pedaled

like she could peel sunset off the road.

She was a fishtail of sand and the clatter

of rusty fenders coasting.

At dusk, mom would sit on the stoop listening

to her tires churning gravel.

We were new to Florida, living with dad’s parents

in a mobile home edging an unpaved road.

There was no AC, just aluminum roofing

sealing in the summer heat.

Sweat from four adults and one child

marinated inside the walls.

Most evenings I came outside with mom

airing my legs in cutoffs as Nikki streaked by.

Lap after lap. Orbiting

like she was caught by the gravity of this place.

Nightfall was our renewable resource,

its shadows filling in the gaps of her ripped clothes,

transforming her briefly

before the sunrise tore her up once more.

She’d wait for her folks’ light to go out,

then lean her bike against the chain link, tiptoe in.

Every evening it was the three of us

keeping vigil under the moon.