

Someplace Else

by J.B. Lacombe

Flish flash, flish flash, flicker of triangle lights. As he deparks, I say, "See that girl?"

She crosses at the stop sign with blond hair flip, flash of white teeth: rips cookie from wrapper, drops wrapper on ground.

"I bought her a cookie," I say.

"You shouldn't have done that," he says.

"Why?"

He veers through the intersection. He's a wham-bam driver, fast and loud (busted muffler).

"Every time she sees you, she'll want something," he says. "You shouldn't teach a kid to be like that."

"Like what? To want cookies?"

"Manipulative."

I'm dismayed she's a litterbug but still think it good to buy cookies for children. Where I come from, we stuff child pockets with cookies and coins and dreams. For chunks of hours I forget he's not from there. Then something reminds me like a slap across the face, like he grabbed the hair at the nape of my neck and pulled, was mad at me.

Two years later, he drops me at the bus terminal so I go back where I came from. Ten years after that, she stands at a major intersection at 1 AM. Flick flack, flick flack, flash of the man's lighter as they negotiate sex, and I would pay anything to make the world something it's not, but I'm not there, I'm someplace else.

