Flat Tire
Leon H. Hsu

Flattened, the tire was. Pedalling with great strength, I push myself forward in the country road illuminated by lonely street lamps, leading the front tire—headstrong—advancing. Trailing behind, the synthetic black rubber greets the asphalt paved road with a kiss from a frail body. In turn, a bathetic road rash of a romance cut short by the jealous effort of the front wheel.

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As in horseback riding, it seems, each leap forward trembles the spinal cord, sending signals of alarm that attend to the physicality of both the earth and the flesh. In such a way, powered by the repetitions of my leg movements, unevenly, stumbling into the site where the bike pump rests with its cheerful blue cord. Rescuing the fate of the twins, one from tiresome work, the other from lonesome melancholy, but briefly as they would soon learn.

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Once again, unable to contain its life-sustaining breath, the weight of my body—shouldering the tote which conceals the parallel reality still corked in that bottle of Rioja—brings the back wheel down to its knees. An attempt to rub skin with its former summer fling, embracing in flatness. Or like a flaccid cock unaroused by that supposedly amorous subject, he stands, no longer, without clinging to the bitterness of road-burn/sincerity.

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Heightened tension, with an intent to stay, for the grip of present stretches further than an intended destination of a Homeric epic. Disregarding the skeleton of the bike and that of my being, all that remains is the acuteness of back pain, equivalent to a stubborn half-broken cork stuck in the bottleneck, clinging to its share of Dionysian blessing. Caught between the act and the acidity, deflated Ego and displaced desire, reality and the Real. Like the aftermath of one Geryon-Herakles affair in Anne Carson’s Autobiography of Red, “caught between the tongue and the taste.”