

FIFTH AND TENTH

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THE GLOW RECEDES FROM their faces, the shine fades from their eyes, and the two of them, an elderly man and an elderly woman, step backward onto the curb, putting one foot behind the other on the sidewalk, retreating through the maze of bodies gathered on the street corner.

In an apartment overlooking the street, a woman stands in her kitchen and watches as the water in her sink is sucked back into the faucet, bringing with it the remains of dinner, bits of mashed potato that it dumps onto the painted clay she holds in her hands. She pulls a clean plate from the rack and watches as the water rising from the drain covers it in ketchup.

A teenage girl looks down at a broken hot dog, staring as the hot dog reassembles itself while it floats into the air and lands in her open palm. She moonwalks to a steel cart and hands the hot dog to a sweaty man in a filthy apron, who gives her five dollars for it.

The road is filled with drivers who wait for the light to change from red to yellow before shifting their cars into reverse.

At the bottom of the bank's front steps, a boy crouches on the ground and inspects the skin on the palm of his hand. Like the skin on his knees, it is ripped open and bleeding. A moment later, he is pushed to the ground and then pulled into the air, his wounds healing themselves, a skateboard leaping from a nearby bush to attach itself to his feet.

In the park, an old woman puts her hand in a plastic bag and lowers it to the ground, rubbing its contents into the grass. When she takes her hand away, her golden retriever backs up to that exact spot, his rear end hovering slightly above it.

The longer the light is green, the slower the reversing cars.

A man in a suit says the word *douchebag* into a cell phone, but it sounds like he's saying *gyapshood*. Everyone sounds like they're speaking a language that hasn't been invented yet.

A woman sits on a bench, reading a book from the end to the beginning, as though she were in Japan.

The two of them, the elderly man and the elderly woman, they stand next to an empty table on the outdoor patio of the cafe, their hands sucking crumbs off the ground like a vacuum and spreading them onto their clothes. They sit down and scoot their chairs towards the table. They cough up mints, which they put into wrappers and place on top of a black leather billfold. The waiter comes by to take the billfold and the candies away, returning with two empty glasses, which the man and the woman spit water into. The elderly man and the elderly woman briefly and awkwardly hold each other's hands across the table before the waiter puts two empty plates in front of them. They pick up their forks and begin scooping food out of their mouths.

Depending on how you look at it, it is their first meal together.