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## Downtown Mobile, 1953

Brianna Carnley

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## DOWNTOWN MOBILE, 1953

Brianna Carnley

The Bienville Square store windows  
were always fanciest in fall,  
best for pal-ing around with the girls  
that I never quite got along with.

Juanita's kitten heels pulverized  
the earthwax of sycamore leaves,  
while she craned her neck to see the man  
she thought was Rock Hudson.

I couldn't help but grin, her oak eyes  
reflecting the stone cross behind me,  
sprouting like a tree from the slab,  
rock roots spreading through the sidewalk cracks.

I leaned back onto the leaves, my index finger  
skimmed the cross's pimpled skin. A silent prayer  
for me, sixty-seven years later.