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## Black Abstraction

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*Jessica Jacobs*

BLACK ABSTRACTION

*Georgia O'Keeffe (en route to New Mexico; 1935)*

Past the land buzzcut for spring  
planting, stray husks skittering  
the hard-packed road, past

Missouri smokestacks panting  
gray-edged prayers to the fields  
that lie empty as waiting

walls. Days my window-propped  
elbow grows shades darker  
than the rest of me, I would crush

every passing thing—rust-red silos,  
scrub oaks' hardscrabble green,  
the mountains blue with distance—

grind it to powder I could cut  
with this sky's titanium white  
to paint it all whole again.

I've never known you to make  
a trip to photograph. While the men  
speak of America and never travel west

of the Hudson, I want to take the country  
in and make it me. Far from New York,  
which is brighter by night, I cross

into Texas where the dusk ignites  
marigold and smolders fast to bone  
black. A hard right brings me to

desert. I stop. The air is cold but the car's  
bonnet is warm beneath my shoulders.  
So dark there is no horizon: all feels

like sky. In such nowhere, my eyes  
can hear: the ticking engine, lowing  
cattle, loud light of the stars.