

I.

Sometimes I look at myself in my antique mirror and think, *you really are so pretty*. I'll stare at my face, turning towards the left corner of my room where my desk lives, catching my faint mustache under harsh lamp light, and finding that I love the contour the black-and-peach whiskers provide to my upper lip. I then turn to face the lamp beside my bed, only to spot remnants in the form of red eyes and a smile sans smile lines, left by those things that give momentary relief from existence within oneself: casual sex, social media, alcohol, and online shopping. My face shifts and contorts within seconds and in front of me flashes the skeletal image of a thin nose, long, protruding cheekbones, and acne scars. The mirror is an ornate, French, gold-leafed piece with an almost unnoticeable crack in the bottom left corner. I place my nose on the crack, splitting the image of my face into asymmetric halves.

II.

When I'm home from college in Tucson, Arizona, I find that the heat melts the days into one homogeneous blob, like a box of crayons left on the sidewalk to run into one brown, waxy mass. Each day, I leave my adobe house and step onto a dry road, which extends forward for a mile and a half before me. Singed by summer heat, the blacktop street sings in harmony with the summer cicadas in the trees, and I'm engulfed in a reverberating *hisssss*.

Here, heat exists so boundlessly that it appears in mirages of wavy patterns that radiate from the pavement. On my daily walks, I look at the wavy corner where the sky meets the street. *That's where I'll turn*

