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## 809-A West Street

Beth Spencer

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## BETH SPENCER

### *809-A West Street*

Every fall I say I won't but I end up driving  
down West Street in Jackson. Even condemned

and boarded, our old duplex a relic, the first thing  
that strikes me is the memory of red beans and rice,

shredded mozzarella and green onions. How we  
cooked them for hours listening to leaves roll

wild and defeated. The night I conceived  
we'd dragged the mattress from its rusted springs

onto the hardwood floor in the front room,  
surrounded by the streetlight of three tall windows.

A couple of weeks later, sitting on the bathroom  
floor at 4:00 a.m., I wanted to take your face in my hands

and shake you. Your pale body slumped like a drowned man.  
Right there we became strangers, a stone split by precise fissure.