

On the Side of the Road

By Jen Mintzer

Down-winding to a H...A...L...t
Jalopy piece of shit
with the real faux leather interior,
rusted shut trunk,
and a sticker I can't quite peel off that
says:
"If you can read this, you're too close."
A strange woman with wire-rimmed glasses
and a chihuahua wearing a sweater in the backseat
pulls over
and asks if I need
Help?
But I tell her I don't
and she edges back out into traffic.
In my warped rear-view mirror,
I watch the speck of noise vanish.
Others follow---
Some stop,
though most are only
spits of showroom chrome
flying past the point of my break-down.
Darkness descends
on the side of the road
and it is then that I realize
I have
no
engine.

Poem awarded the Alfred L. Creager Prize for Creative Writing, Ursinus College, 1997, \$75 cash prize
