

Nothing in Me Is Trying to Be Smaller

1) SOUTH LAMAR, NOON

I cross South Lamar
like my body knows traffic patterns better than drivers do.

Brown skin
taking sun the way asphalt does—
not delicately,
not apologetically.

Postmenopause means
nothing in me is trying to be smaller.
Not my thighs.
Not my opinions.
Not my silence.

A man slows his car.
I don't look.
That's the freedom—
not reaction,
not refusal,
just momentum.

Austin hums.
Heat licks the salt off my collarbone.
Cedar rides the air like a dare.
Somewhere, taco smoke.
Somewhere, a porch fan losing its will.

I think of all the versions of me
that learned to flinch.
They step back.
I keep walking.
Green light.
No permission slip.