

Joshua McKinney

ANOTHER DAY IN THE PERISHING REPUBLIC

That I might thrive,
I went out to run
as I had the day before
and the day before that.

It was late afternoon;
the lowering sun
hung in the pine tops,
smoldering there

as ravens roosting
loosened veils of
pollen, until the very air
shone gold. Awash in light,

I marveled at the real
world, its fullest
wonders felt, not told.
Content, I labored

up a grade to where
two ways converged,
and in the distance I saw
a dancing man,

car door still open
beside him. I thought it joy,
or perhaps awe
at the same light I had seen.

He finished then, and
turning, saw me,
still far off, and raised
a hand. I waved back,

watched him as he drove
away. And all was good.
But when I reached the place
where he had been,

and stopped, and stood

there sweating, out of breath,
I found a king snake
he had stomped to death.