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america

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we found america in a dusty grunt-stop diner with
 chipped orange plastic-topped stools And loaded ash
 trays hidden there among the wayside stations and
 truckstops, lost in the whistle of transportation
 always on the MOVE, never forward, always sideways, or
 home (back)—full speed weary and teary-eyed exhaust
 fumes diffuse into the waffle-house where everyone
 screams out “halloo!” and 14-year old high school
 drop-out waitresses purse their lips with pink lipstick
 smeared eyeliner “what special do ya want” gum-chewers,
 they’re always gum-chewers you can bet your cigarettes,
 your bottom dollar, if it ain’t already gone.

-Lynn Tramonte '98

Upon Being Asked Why I Seem To Stare Into The Carpet So

I’m not the only one who feels this way
 ask any writer who doesn’t
 or cannot for whatever reason
 write anymore
 and every one of them will look away
 off into the distance of some crowded room
 or down into the worn carpet
 as though contemplating its wear
 and I’ll tell you why-
 you see sometimes after putting the pencil down
 and leaving it there for whatever reason
 it gets difficult to fight off the urge
 to gouge it into your arm
 once you pick it up again if
 it doesn’t seem to be doing much of anything else
 and even worse
 being unable to resolve
 what exactly should be done
 with poetry
 maybe it only makes sense
 that so many can’t shake the feeling
 that at the heart of new pencils
 and blank white pages lie only
 fine clean points
 and sharp new edges.

-Matt Makman '96