

In Search of Suburbia

By Jillian Koval

The eggshell Christmas lights out too soon -
Or out too late, or never put away at all -
Like the old lawn ornaments
Chip paint like ticker tape
Onto passing ants,
Too proud to move or be removed,
And the little Dutch children too shy to kiss
Resign to ignore each other
Until the old lady decides
That this moribund romance is her best task
And makes time between tea and Jeopardy
To make them face each other
And work out their problems like everyone else
Who lives on this arrow-straight street
That only stretches as far as you want it to,
While I want it to stretch into eternity -
Spread to the boundaries of outer space -
Because my world seems occupy the earth,
And my street stretches into nowhere.
The telephone lines connect to the nearest star
And pump the cosmos into our TVs

Where we'll sit for days and never want to ask
Why there's nothing to watch during the day
But the soap operas and the infomercials
Whose merchandise actually sells to people like us
Because I saw exercise tapes in Mrs. Sandra's trash
When I was walking the dog,
Who has catalogued every tree and sign
Telling us how fast to go where to go
When to stop and that we're a liability
When we play outdoors though we rarely do
Because our yards are too small
And our fences too short
And our trees all cut down so we could build a pool
Which gets green when we abandon suburbia once a year

For even hotter weather down south for a week or two
Because at least there's a beach and some tranquility
Because a street is never peaceful with so many passing cars
And no amount of iced tea could make the neighbors go away
With their dogs in a fuss and children dripping popsicle juice
Onto our patio while they stare wide-eyed at the hammock
Where I like to read my romance novels
On days when it's not too hot and not too windy
And not too tedious to participate in suburbia.