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No Longer

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No Longer

The wind in my hair
goes at the speed of light
as my legs, tan and hairless,
pump the bicycle faster
in order to thrust me through
the space. "Just enough room".
I scream as I fly
between the bumper of Grandma's
brown Dodge and the tree at the end
of the driveway, the one Dad sometimes
bumps into, backing up, when he is drunk.
I am seven. A big boy my mother
says as she explains the rules of riding.
'Stay on our street. It's a dead end so
there's no traffic. And you will
come in when I tell you to.'
"Yea, yea", I say running out the front
door, paint flaking off in the warm breeze.
"Yes." I silently repeat.
On the fourth time through the space,
I realize Mom, Dad, even Grandma, sit
on the porch. when there was a porch.
"Watch me, watch what I can do."
I say, turning the bike back towards
the empty street. My whole body,
moving to create speed, hurls
itself and the bike back to the tree
and the car. The wind roar in my ears
perhaps deadens my senses, for I crash
straight-as-an-arrow, as Grandma later
recounts, into the tree, which my
father cuts down two years later.

Shannon Salser