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## RIP

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# RIP

Shaina Monet

*Vassar Miller Poetry Award Honorable Mention*

*In the Haitian vodou tradition, it is believed by some that the souls of the newly dead slip into rivers and streams and remain there, under the water, for a year and a day. Then, lured by ritual prayer and song, the souls emerge from the water and the spirits are reborn. These reincarnated spirits go on to occupy trees, and, if you listen closely, you may hear their hushed whispers in the wind.*

– Edwidge Danticat, “A Year and A Day”

Stacy knows the way things go around here  
like vapor, heavy, hard to see. they will  
extract their bodies, count from one to three

deduce the incident from the speedometer  
and brake. they will not correct the mistakes  
the newspaper article makes, or off

road next to the river tape the coroner’s  
report to a stake with flowers. for  
three hours her body bathes in water.

she’d lost her way back. in the passenger’s  
seat, the child bobbed, a crushed doll, while the metal  
clanks cooled in the flank. here, bodies will find

her. Stacy hears them call. the car seat came  
down, undone, after all, turned her right side  
up, out of the water. they’ll linger here

touch. remove her daughter. tire the casing  
round the part made visible by the flood  
light, dragging the river’s mouth. to find her

follow the cricket’s sticky click. in the  
humid, thick Mississippi red earth, roof  
crumples like crepe paper. Stacy knows

the way things go around here & there will  
be none of that. after three hundred days  
she counts sixty-five more, takes a deep breath.

salt water rips her awake. some figure  
angels await. Stacy figures every  
day you die, every day you'd wake.