

# Sweaty Palms, Cal.

*Doug Lawrence*

The screen door stalls on its spring.  
Listless antennae wave  
from inside their room at Roach Motel.  
The door presses slowly closed  
but the latch doesn't catch.

She won't answer his call this time.  
She sips a pensive wine  
with a quiet bouquet.  
Under the lukewarm stars  
her bare feet steam  
in the cool sand.

There's a rose at the bottom  
of the phone booth.  
A voice with no brakes  
is out on the wire  
in a screaming wind.

Powerlines fry the radio.  
Music like hot popping sausage  
tangles in cigarette smoke,  
jumps through the wind-wing.

Long skins of asphalt  
slide under the hood ornament.  
Sweaty Palms, Cal.,  
balancing a black snake on the nose:  
The engine winds out,  
a fly under the lid,  
a buzz inside the ear.

Sweaty Palms, Cal.,  
she didn't think I'd come back  
and I spat  
like a fat bug  
on her windshield.