

JOE CISLO

*Detroit, 1976*

It was cool out the night of the bicentennial fireworks, and my grandfather warmed a blanket on the engine of the green Grand Torino. The gas and oil fumes made me high. Over the river, purple turned to pink and orange turned to gold. Canada was there—still is—and I wondered if we looked different from their side. I went to the rail and craned my neck to look at the Ambassador Bridge and the outline of the works at Zug Island. They were like spaceships landed—a thousand lights in no apparent order. I was six years old. I looked into the water trying somehow to see the Detroit–Windsor Tunnel. My grandfather watched the crowd, making sure the blacks or the hippies or the assembly-line men weren't too close to us. His hand worked the pennies and dimes in his right pocket incessantly. Now he asks for his wife incessantly, sometimes once or twice a minute when he gets anxious. Each time we tell him she's gone it's like 1976, like cinders burning out to fall and float on the surface of the river.