

Alex Sobel

The Name I'll Give

Photo by John Simpkins: Looking south from Old Andrews School, a virga illuminated with late afternoon light. Cactus Smyth's homestead in middle ground.

Later, telling the story, I almost hit it. The dog. Her, I say her but I never knew. It wasn't that, was never that close. Window down, yelling, bad part of town, whatever that means. I got out, cut her off, allowed her to fall toward me, on a tract. The business was closed, but the parking lot visible, letters spelling out something I didn't want. Pure bred, covered in yellow burs. I picked them off, but I could only do so much. I couldn't take her, didn't have an aim. For her part, she kept moving, that tract once again. Without a collar, I had nothing to grab, the burs, my fingers were bleeding. I would have kept following, but my car window still open, I ran back, thought I could do both. Returning, she'd slipped under a fence. I wanted to call out, but I had nothing, no name to the feeling, no description I could point to later. I stood out there in the dark, the cold, almost grateful that I didn't have to make a choice. Back in the car, a song was on the radio, one I knew. This is the name I'll give, I thought. It's then that I told myself I'd never listen to that song again.

Alex Sobel is a music teacher and freelance journalist living in Toledo, Ohio. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in publications such as *The Saturday Evening Post Online*, *Stoneslide Corrective*, *Foundling Review*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, *theNewerYork*, and others.



