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## At the Brink of the Street

*Andrew Wright*

Erika lived between the Longs and the Hayes,  
a pedal down Winding Way  
past red doors and orange brick,  
through a suburban autumn,

in a tall two-story  
pallid sallow and chestnut home  
with hazel trim and door.

Broken pieces of her driveway scattered among mine.

A canopy of walnut leaves  
muffled the house in dusk  
and disbanded grass to patches.  
The angular roof made the Spidels uneasy.

Erika's voice was lost among four  
like her, and one on the way.  
The addition of liable years  
drove her father crazy.

Wind and fallen-nut percussions  
scored his descent measured in restive nights.  
Mr. Watt's lights were green  
and uneven on the walls.

Kitchen-light burned my eyes on carpool mornings.  
The grey mini-van was a pocket of exhaust.  
Her mother never spoke to me directly.  
She held the glaze of a still-frame.

I watched the fire of tail lights as they passed  
and closed signs reflected off the wet streets.  
Erika stared past me.

I was the chatter that fades  
from the foreground when reading a book.

She, a product of sternness and lunacy,  
once gave me a bread crumb smile.



Baggot Street

*Gary Petrie*