**Shannon Carroll**

Among the reasons I have contemplated as a root of my young anxiety, the death of Shannon Carroll is probably at the top of the list. I was a very young boy when this event happened. As a result, it probably molded me for the rest of my life. Many of the details are gone forever while others have never left me. My descriptions of these events are how they sit with me now, whether true or fabricated. At this point, I do not know the difference.

I must’ve been about three years old. I believe this because it was just my mother, myself, Shannon and her mother at the scene. None of my four sisters were around so they must have been at school. (Except for my little sister, who was not born yet.) Of course, family lore says that I didn’t walk until I was three so I may have been 4 years old. In any case, I was too old for the crib and too young for school. It was a warm and pleasant morning and neighbor had just recently cut his grass. There were piles of brown moist grass laying in the gutter pan. While our mothers were conversing, Shannon got the idea to pick up clumps of grass and carry them across the street and throw them in the open field across the street from our houses. She would grab a pile, run parallel with the gutter for about 50 feet, make a sharp left turn and cross the street and throw the pile into the field. After watching this a few times, I decided to join in. I grabbed a pile and ran behind her, running parallel with the curb. As I followed her, I heard a loud engine of a car coming down the street. As Shannon crossed the street, I saw the car coming upon us quickly. I froze staring at the car as it got close to us. The car slammed on brakes and skidded. Shannon seemed to disappear. The rest of the event was a blur. I vaguely remember my mother screaming and, afterward, shaking.

I forgot this for many years. When I was in my late teens, my mother asked if I remembered if I remembered seeing “Shannon dragged under the car.” I did not but it caused me to feel a very uneasy feeling as a result of that question. The subject was rarely brought up after that. I have always wondered about that moment and its effect on me.

A lost piece

Of my life

As a child

A big piece of who I am

No memory

Of what happened

Before or after

But

That moment

Is forever here

Hands full of dead grass

In my hands

All wet from cutting

But dry on the edges

Following her long blonde hair

And running on the road

Making a left turn

To deposit grass

Into an empty field

Straight up ahead

A white car speeds towards us

It is loud and fast

I see it

I freeze

And watch

Shannon never sees it

And crosses the road

The driver only sees her

At the last minute

Slamming brakes

No screams

From Shannon

Shannon disappears

My mother

Screams

And cries

And shakes

Barely old enough

To walk

Shannon and I

But now dead

Are Shannon

And my youth