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In History: I
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IN HISTORY: I

Everyone knew him. Knew, but the radio swayed the room with a sweet jazz—saxophone monologue, then the whole quartet with something quick and to the point, then muted trumpet—so she couldn't hold his image. She heard her brother saying "Watch this!" Saw him and felt and heard him rolling down the sidewalk in '68 on a skateboard. How could she piece this together? And the sax saying, "How could you / How could you / How could you / How could you do what you done?" It was unmistakable. This time it was Bird muscled up and somehow barely sketching those notes. His whole life a mess and this sweet song. They all knew their neighbor. Knew how he moved beyond the blinds. Sometimes she saw his finger tugging the blinds the way her mother would pull down the corner of her eye to drip the medicine in. He was back there—sick, afraid—and they were shooting baskets or walking the children to the park. If you thought about it too much the world became intolerable. In this song the saxophone says, "We were down at Camarillo when the man came up to me and said / How could you do it / How could you do what you done?" They all circled the neighborhood while the bombs, no, *ordnance*, fell into Iraq. While the Scuds flared into the Jordanian night. While the World Bank engineered the end of life in the Amazon. *You could do this*, she thought. It was your duty: To stop at the Handi-Mart, the video store, the bakery. To wander the aisles of Penney's, your wallet fat with expectation. What if we all bought the right car or leaned our houses into the sun? If we ate fewer burgers or biked the eight miles to work? But he was watching them. And all she could see was the break in the blinds.