

Magister Vitae

by Carlene M. Gadapee

*And tell me this: of all the roads you know,
Which is the quickest way to get to Hades?*

—ARISTOPHANES

What the hell's the deal
with these suicidal, daredevil
frogs, who insist on hopping out
onto the highway, half hidden
by fog and mist, scantily illuminated
by headlights? I hate the squishy
pop of them, these slow-moving pale
river dwellers out for the thrill of their
short, rain-blessed lifetime.
I look like a drunk driver, so I stop

playing tag with the frogs. I avoid
the larger ones, the ones I can actually see
before I hear the soft *thunk*. I have little to say
about the living and dying of the smaller ones;
they are too slow, too dazed, too intent
on a strange mission. It feels fated, this asphalt massacre,
and I am sorry to have to hit them.
We all have a role to play: theirs,
to cross I-93 with froggy abandon,
and mine, to make the survivors feel they earned it.