

RAY NAYLER
Old School

Empty of car rows, every evening this
Lot where the kids come, coiling their concave,
Oiled as the ball bearings blazing beneath.
Outside the arcade where Altered Beast plays
They're grinding the firecurb. Rise from your grave!
The Olde English, bag-bound, burns in their throats with
Cadged cigarettes purged from dads' dresser drawers.
The kids talk the trickhorde from tic-tac to tailstall,
From Ollie to frontside, from 50 to Five-0,
Christ airs and crailgrabs, creepers and cavemen.
The company sponsors, the skatepros and skateshops,
And stickers, and kickturns, and Christian Hosoi.
Switchflip to shove it, suede in the grip tape,
Shinscars and scabbed shanks, boardshorts and shortbolts,
Then bored of the wordspin, somebody stands.
His duct tape and shoe goo grab at the grip tape,
The black asphalt pulls at his urethane wheels.
First: parking block boneless (the boys on the bench grin)
Then an Ollie grab old-school (joked for a joke).
They half-time a handclap, he halfcabs to heelflip.
A quick double kickflip, cruised to a crailgrab
And everyone stands now, stunned into silence
By his kneepoem of long limb, of liftoff, of loftspin.
He shrugs and just shoves off, slack-shunting the blacktop.
Cool is a cold nod, a casual Coke-swig
And back to the trick talk, the tips for good tailstalls,
The tales of how Tony Hawk toeflipped down ten stairs
Or nailed a 900. It's only the last trick,
Eclipsed the next evening by any of them.