

January 15, 2005
Cape May

Born in Hamilton

I am a car on a road lined with pear trees in vanilla bloom. I was a station wagon – later, larger, an SUV. I am now the freshly painted white dashes on an added lane.

I am evergreens and paper-white azaleas and large slabs of granite guarding the park. Across the street I am a muddy football field. I mix with the gravel in the high school parking lot, laced too with chunks of safety glass from every senior's fender-bender.

I was a field, a corn field, a soybean field, but today I am a Barnes & Noble, a Home Depot, and World Class Shop Rite. I feel the draft through the bricks and the grease on the napkins of a ten-year-old Pizza Hut and then I am renovated.

I am a Dairy Queen, a Carvel, a Baskin Robbins. I taste two, ten, thirty-one flavors. I am a new designer home, a mansion among many on a street named after the developer's wife, Traci with an i.

I am a fountain in a man-made lake with pristinely sculpted shores. I am a duckling crossing the highway under a sign of my silhouette. I am a playground with a slide and a set of monkeybars only. I watch ginkgos pelt my children with their smells.

I sit as a brick in a path next to a driveway and today I am worn down into the dirt from the weight of poorly-aimed tires. In their season, I see bags of leaves cover me, and trash cans, and yip-sized dogs from next door.

I was a Japanese flowering cherry tree that burst magenta for two glorious weeks each spring until I split and fell under the weight of my own conceit. The pine tree's shade was taken that year as well, so I become new light on the shingles and the front lawn's crabgrass. I wait to be replanted, restored, rebuilt once more.