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French Vanilla

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French Vanilla

The landscape was gold
along the Californian coast

of apartment complex backyards—
mostly driveways and parking spots,

no yards to speak of, just
puffs of incandescent

youth-gone-mad, latch-key
kids with sunned-black feet,

that's who these shores belonged to,
not those affluent pixies who float

between dandelions and dollars, painting
playschool graffiti squares that used to be so

dull compared to the gritty chalkings that
used to span the walls of underground caves,

ritual art from before the birth of Christ, from
before any of these kids were even told of guilt.

These kids were never told of bliss, not in
these vacant lots left barren from nine to five.

There was never bliss for a child of seven who was
mugged for the very first time of just fifty cents

because some other kid, barely twice his age,
could not afford the gift of summer solstice

given by the traveling ice cream man who
used to span the golden coast of California.