**Joyce Carol Oates:**

***Dreaming America*(1975)**

When the two-lane highway was widened the animals retreated.

Skunks, raccoons, rabbits - even their small corpses disappeared from the road-   
  
transformed into rags

then into designs

then into stains

then nothing.

When the highway was linked to another

then to another

six lanes then nine then twelve rose

sweeping to the horizon

along measured white lines.

The polled Herefords were sold.

When the cornfields were bulldozed

the farmhouses at their edges turned into shanties;

the outbuildings fell.

When the fields were paved over

Frisch's Big Boy rose seventy-five feet in the air.

The Sunoco and Texaco and Gulf signs competed

on hundred-foot stilts

like eyeballs on stalks

white optic-nerves

miraculous.

Illuminated at night.

Where the useless stretch of trees lay

an orange sphere like a golf ball

announces the Shopping Mall, open

for Thursday evening shopping.

There, tonight, droves of teenagers hunt

one another, alert on the memorized pavement.

Where did the country go? - cry the travelers, soaring past.

Where did the country go? - ask the strangers.

The teenager never ask.

Where horses grazed in a dream that had no history,

tonight a thirteen-year-old girl stands dreaming

into the window of Levitz's Record Shop.

We drive past, in a hurry.   
  
We disappear.  
  
We return.  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_