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Small leap from my street to old town. Turn right on Oxnard Boulevard. Three minutes with lights to its heart. 10 blocks, many miles across the border. Latino cafes, clothes, pizza. Cowboy hats, pawn shops, travel agency, Mexican music. Foot traffic to *La Gloria Market*; day workers at 4th and Meta; a line wiring money to Oaxaca. *La Cultura*. More than I can measure. Same blood — different lives. From my eyes to theirs, staring, tongues divided. Our homes — squeezed together. Survivors by kismet. Mixed seeds scattered. What do we say? What stories, what descriptions? And why has God kissed us different? Then again, this is California. Cars, people, bound for avoidance. Moment to moment, awake, asleep. Our souls forsaking the familiar for new soil. Evolution, revolution frying. Burgers, burritos, dollars, pesos, people, chopped into *pico de gallo*. And here we come, eye to eye on a single block. Gone again in seconds, fellow migrants separated by skin and speed. One more block, now scattered, brief encounter, close but no touch.

Same Town, Different Lives

Tim Pompey

Tim Pompey is a freelance news writer, poet, and musician from Oxnard, California. He has been published in poetry journals throughout the U.S. and was awarded the *Still Waters Press Winter Poetry Award 2000* for his chapbook *Getting Through the Fog*. His poems have recently been included in *BorderSenses*, and *Best Poem*, as well as several anthologies, including *Poems for the Mountains*, and *The Venomed Kiss*.

