Putting too Many Miles on The Car

from the back of my father's truck as the gray siding of our house got lost behind tall trees and parked cars like a lighthouse in the fog. Maybe it's crocus and daffodils that has made me come here again to look for my parents, fifteen years younger, sharing a swing on the porch, drinking iced tea from tall blue glasses, laughing and smoking in a passing summer breeze.

Daniel Donaghy
Winter's frost comes quickly to Blue Valley.
As I wander down the road,
I pull my turtle neck up over my chin
and stare into the sun as it slides
down the sky, half hidden by the Blue
Mountains

Beneath the bare oaks
I can hear the crackle of the leaves
and the splintering of the hollow acorns
as my boots tread on the frozen,

Mr. Zerr's farm rests at the top of the valley.
One of the bottom rails of his fence
has fallen, and the old chestnut mare
is stretching her neck through
the open space to snatch a few remaining
blades of green grass.

As I reach over the fence to touch her,
she startles, turns away,
and canters toward the Mountains.

Candace Brobst
From the window I saw my parents
sitting at the kitchen

table again, my mother with her swollen
feet up to relieve the pain
from her blue veins, my father cradling
a small glass of Schaefer’s
the shrapnel
in his neck glimmering
under that white bulb
saw him start to cough
again from forty years of Pall Malls,
so hard that I ran inside, scared
this time he wasn’t going to stop.
that he wouldn’t be able to hawk
the green and yellow mucus up.
this time he’d hold his heart
until it exploded
like his father’s did, like I’m
afraid mine will before long.
But he did stop; standing
afterward over the sink,
drinking glass after glass
of tap water before turning
to stroke my poker-straight
hair, before bending to sit
me with his thick hands.

Each time I take out the trash,
I remember the bags
my father filled with empty
Schaefer’s cans
in the night-light dark
of the kitchen, my mother and I
half-watching TV,

half-watching him

at the glass table
elbows up, a Pall Mall
burning between his thick hands.

In that darkness
she told me of his parents,
both dead
before he was fourteen,
about the foxhole in Korea,
he and another man
the only
of forty-six to survive,

about the nurses in Seoul
he thought were angels
because of their white
dresses and smiles,
who arrived every two hours
with pills and fresh
gauze for the dime-sized
shrapnel wounds in his neck,
whom he still talks to
in his sleep

asking them to come
come and lie down with him
some nights reaching out for a
hand or breast,
some nights touching himself

deep in his other life,
calling Edna.

Theresa
Diane.
WORDS TO ACCOMPANY
THE STORM

The storm is coming
and I hold nothing

Tree limbs crack by rate,
Dancing, blackness beneath the moonlight.

A cold night comes
And winter blows out the wind.

perplexing the lovers' spending now.
watching out cats
To gain comfort from her
sneaking
And she's not

We go on our couch
And sleep on her
drugged into a winter trance.
In the deep kiss of night
thunder-eyed beasts
glint from within
rustling shadows,
dancing on the line
of the thing itself,
not a mere shadow
of something else.

Properties of light
reacting in darkness
with fear
feeding insecurity
with the perceived
grit, somewhere
over there
where there is
no path
through the brush
and I,
the hunted,
exactly in place.

Waiting for thunder
to crack my eyes
like those
of a mouse
at the moment
the talons
take it
from night.
I too reside in shadow,
dancing
with beasts
on the line
that is,
one self.
the trees dictate

PRO CREATION

God says (somewhere between Exodus 4 and 5).
and so
His people locate their destiny,
tripping down the aisle to
a bed of oysters

BIRTH
BIRTH
BIRTH

fourteen children popping out like
Orville Redenbacker egged them on,
screwing like bunnies,
bunnies bopping
through the forest
while the Nature channel documents
The Wolf
tearing off whatever limb he can grasp
and sucking the blood
through straw like incisors,
it’s not like
bloated babies
with flies buzzing into their nostrils
wail
for the
block of jello
I just tossed away
oh, mother,
when your beautiful newborn baby girl
lies under a tent,
tubes and needles
her only connection to

LIFE,

can you
ignore your lactating breast
and whisper
go ahead.

Corina Bensonic
THE NORTH GATE

Then he brought me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, and I fell upon my face. Ezekiel 44:4

A small town drowsing under siege of August sunlight. The red stone legs of faith enconced. A mystery thrusting upward in the weary air. Waiting with patient ambiguity for an hour's exploration. Youth overcomes baseless trepidation. A circuit is drawn and crossed, that unseen line Beyond the Tree that separates the sify of the familiar from that which is feared behind the silent walls.

Two summers more— and the A mystery tinged with familiarity, dark faces And a faint sound golden hall. Approach the frightenred fascination: Bright lights flood the candle and crown The for Serpent Nailed, on the darkening air dust to dust in a

Pause before a darkened basement window. In and empty well, down stairs strewn with remains of seasons past: A door not dared, a window masking daemonic movement. And a space without form or boundary. Tenths of blackness caress a decision half made. Steps are left untaken; day is left to expire, unused. Another birth, another course; the circle is again come round. Pass the Tree, across the shadowed threshold, a different stage. Where locked doors bar the faithless, mounting the steps To feel the gate grown cold with the fall of Brother Sun.

Gate is open. dark windows with of voices echoing in the blistered Gates in the Garden beyond, illuminates chalice tears of magnus consueco and The cry of Mother and Son drifting Poor banished children of Eve, miner's town.

Blake Lindsey
DANCE INDIAN

The pounding of their drums called me forth like a pulsating heartbeat.

I kept down the old stairwell towards the door, and pushed it open like a child spying on
Santa Christmas Eve. No, I couldn't look in that door, the light would shine in and turn
everyone to me. I snuck back towards the main entrance. Groping for a crack in the door
curtain, I strained my eyes to find a parting, none to be found. The crack in the door would
have to serve as my theater. With my face pressed against the double doors, I watched intently
to the rhythm pounding of feet on the stage, spellbound. I observed a piece of history, which
I never thought possible. This was not what we were told it looked like in history books of an
elementary school child. This was not what we were raised to believe. This was beautiful
beyond description. They chanted their call back and forth to one another, each echoing the
reverberating sound with its hauntingly ghostlike quality. With full head dress down to their
ankles, they pranced the wooden floor in their three-hundred-moccasins. With feathers on
their arms and tassels on their legs, they waved their arms to the sky and reached for the
heavens, grasping for what? Like Frolicking children tossing leaves into the air, they threw their
bodies heavenward as their muscles went limp. They dropped to the ground, and the drum
beat louder. Their dance was wrapped in tradition, heritage was spun outward from their
beats and chants. They held and nurtured the land, yet where we came from, we pushed them
off. We pushed them to the edge of the earth, into the ocean. The trial of tears, I could hear
them cry in their chant. Their pain and suffering came through in the cries of the women, and
the anger in the men. Why did we push them so far? Why did we make them leave, and where
do their dance now?

Jennifer R. Clarke
The mine was shut down
And everyone was gone
Except Bill.
Every day he went to work
Flooded the drifts,
Sealing the shafts.
Setting the dynamite
Inside the stack.
400 feet up
Flashed the warning lights.
So many times
He’d climbed its side
To change those bulbs
While on the ground
His wife watched
And prayed
That his knees wouldn’t fail.
Smashed in a mine accident,
They were held together

Bill

By bolts.
But on the top of that stack
Bill never thought he’d slip
Or fall—
He just sat
And watched his work
With a bird’s view
But now the fuse was set
And blown
And the stack crashed
To the ground,
And Bill just stood there
After everyone was gone
Picking up the pieces in his mind

Kris Hauptly
They gather leaves and twigs, the colorful pieces of fall for their collages.

unshaven face. He writes in a book propped on his knee. A necessary precaution: they position themselves between fact and fiction.

CLASSROOM

The teachers see him there, on the bench, army green field jacket, and

AFTERNOON

Their eyes are lively and their little voices chirp like finches.
It's worn.
It's not yours. MINE.
And I've had it for years.

No one's making you wear it.
So, don't complain.
If you're embarrassed,
I won't walk with you.
That's all I can tell you.

I won't take it off and carry it.
I won't not wear it.
Just because, you don't like it.

They are part of what makes my jacket MINE.
Not yours.

Reminders of who I was
who I love to be.

What do you mean, holes?
Those are merely statements of style.
Symbols of getting my money's worth.

Besides, I walk with you
and I don't like your hat.

Jennifer A. Dvorich
They and their definitive strength and humph but the fact that they don't ever think twice is enough to make me

"I know that you have to do what you've got to do. It's not a matter of a man who doesn't deserve to be

"That's right!" he cried. "I'll stand by this man! I don't care what the world thinks of me, but I'm not going
to let anyone else take his place."

"But—but didn't you say...?"

"'Tisn't that I care for myself, sir, but I care for the man who's going to suffer."

"You're the bravest man I ever knew, sir."

"I know that I'm not perfect, but I know that I'm doing what I can for the right side."

"And that's all that matters, sir."

"Yes, it is."

"And now, I'm going to do what I can to help you."
Stark, cold.
That is how it was when
She was There.

Darkness. I am spinning
through
the tunnel, Falling,
what
can we control?

Nothing.
I feel
It.
Happening,
Soon
she will have Gone.

The most Regal.
A
Lady in its truest sense.
Tall, stately,
but
very Loving.

She always
Knew
Everything - or
seemed to.
Happiness and Love
in that house.
Of course the occasional squabble -
Mother-Daughter-Father-Granddaughter.
Life
is not Without
Conflict.

And the stories. Of
Youth gone By
And
Still to Come.

Family and friends
always gathering to
Share.
Quiet times,
when early in
the morning
as a child
I'd slip into the
big bed
with her, and
snuggle
up to that Sweet,
Soft, gray-ma flesh.

I can still Smell
That Smell.
Her.
The Smell that
drives my little dog mad
as
she races around the house
Searching
for the one
that she remembers as do I.
Unforgettables.
The agony
that still Thurs
as the loss is remembered every day.
A scent, a sight, a thought -
It All crashes forward . . .

Jennifer Mancelli


Letter to Jodie

I saw you last week. The trees were in blossom.
You were in cab going south on Pine wearing that beret
that I love and looking desperately in your purse. I
ran out in street but I couldn’t catch you. You drove
right by and out of sight.

When I saw you and Rita at Dobb’s, so close drinking
marasquino, I knew she had something I didn’t. It killed
me. I knew you were lovers and I wasn’t so surprised
to find you entwined on the couch.

Went to Joey’s Cafe where we used to have coffee
and cigarettes when it was raining. You always looked
so sexy. The smoke like ribbons in your hair, your eyes
twinkle spots staring. You were always so distant,
I feel like a fool. I couldn’t understand. I wish you would
have told me.

Robert Jones

Roxanne

I’m not going to last, I’m just not, said Roxy.
Charlie Parker was on the record player. Roxy sat in Indian-
style on the hardwood floor of my apartment. She had on one of those
hippie skirts that went down to her shaven ankles.

I’d been reading this book by Kurt Vonnegut’s son. He was a
schizophrenic, she said. He grew up on this commune and I guess he went
nuts. I think I’m phony too.

You are not, I said.
I am, or at least I’m going to be, she said.

Maybe your just a little compulsive. You want a beer? I knew she
drank beer.

Yes right. I don’t even know what’s in that stuff. Probably
something carcinogenic, she said.

Roxy had brought me an old Coca-Cola bottle filled with orange
and red leaves. They had just fallen from the tree in your front yard, she
said. Roxy never had the heart to pick flowers.

I went over to the record player and changed the album to
Thelonious Monk. Our Dad used to love it and I knew it was her favorite.

Oh, man, I love this one, she said.

I took it from Pop’s collection. I said. The record was old and beat,
it was hissing and popping and I said, I wonder how many cracks are there
in that album?

Shut up, Bob, she said. Her eyes were like two stone book moons
because she was laughing. She always laughs.

Remember a couple of years ago, that thing on P.B.S. and that
man. Oh he was so freaky, that grown man was turning off and on the light
one, two, three, four, five, six. He couldn’t stop, Roxy said.

Man that guy was nuts, I said and then laughed.

Stop it, Bob, you know what I mean, she said.

I know. How about when we used to go on vacation and you were
so stuck on those license plates, I thought you were loony, I said.

The sun was low in the sky and it was so orange. It played on her
long hair, leaving a halo. Thelonious played the piano so.

Blue and I wondered if he was drinking when he recorded it.

Roxy said. I am nuts and you know what.

There was a pause. Her eyes were staring blankly as if it weren’t
even there. Thelonious dropped out and the saddest sax solo started. I
think it was Charlie Rouse.

I just have to end it all, she said. I mean, I can’t talk to people. My
roommates are on my nerves, they waste too much electricity. I hate the
fucking government, there’s no one to vote for. I mean, I just want to live in
the woods by myself. Fucks the world.

You’ll become a hermit. People will talk, I said.
I want to be a hermit. I won’t have to talk to anyone or worry
about anything, she said.

None of us can talk, Roxy. I hate it. I mean look at Kevin, he’s
more quiet than all of us, I said.

Huh, he’s way gone. Sometimes I worry about him she said.
You should worry about him. We’re all thinkers. I’ve told you how
I can’t paint anymore. I go out of my mind, and I do. How about at the
dinner table, I can’t stand it and dad can’t even sit down to eat. So you
know you’re not alone. You just have to deal with it, I said.

I don’t want to deal with it, Roxy said. The record was over and it
kept slipping back, hissing and cracking.

There’s too many cracks on that record, she said. Let’s go for ice
cream.

You don’t eat ice cream, I said.

Of course not, said Roxy. What do you get pistachio and tell me how
it tastes.

Robert Jones