

Ashes of Dead Stars

Rear View

Dandridge Drive-Thru Beverage  
is gone, love child of a general  
store and covered bridge,  
choked by convenience  
chains, economy of scale:  
gone, soon forgotten.

No more crony clubhouse  
for jokers and smokers  
to pass hot nights staring  
into the slow parade,  
grading the trade, hoping  
to catch some thigh.

A species born endangered,  
vanishing breed thinner  
by one. Its skeleton stands  
time-worn, forlorn, most  
of the parts still good  
for something—maybe

a museum on the outskirts  
of town, oil drum around  
back for pitched empties  
and spit, neon sign starting  
to stutter, hot rod dreams  
up on blocks somewhere.

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Sonnet with Reptiles

Before the Chianti  
is opened, before  
the pesto is ground,  
I'm already high

on basil oiled fingers,  
gush of tomato  
juice on my chin,  
dazzled by darting

Lazarus lizards,  
captured and brought  
to Ohio from Italy,  
who rule the rocks

in my garden, their own  
Mediterranean dream.

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### Hide and Seek

My kitchen is a clutter of purloined letters hiding in plain sight. Odd shaped things—Cuisinart blade, French press plunger—come to mind, but not to hand without a search. Eyes methodically scan the surfaces: counter, three sinks, two tables, the dishrack. Repeat. Add the floor, look behind and under, more slowly, with a curse this time. That vegetable knife is too large, too brown to hide in familiar stacks and scatters of glass and silver where every meal starts with a prayer to Saint Anthony.

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“Something Old,…”

A gentle joke mingled  
at my second wedding,  
“They’re registered at Seven Hills Resale.”

True enough, things I like best  
have often been discarded  
in the common market.

Home-made, well worn  
things, not wallflowers,  
participants in the fray.

Companions for hand and eye,  
things someone might find  
worth trying to mend.

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End of September

*for Carl Sagan*

waning fire down  
to quivering lumps  
of light, furnace  
orange and charcoal

one triangle tongue  
of flame in the corner  
of the bed flickers out

comfort, warmth, wisps  
of smoke, brush of hair  
from the crown  
of a lover's head

these things and more,  
everything emanating  
from ashes of dead stars