

Transportation Struggles

Headlights

If you were a hunter,
you would not leave me to die
here, you would eat me.
You would skin me, butcher
my meat into sustenance.
Instead, I lie on cold pavement
watching you inspect your car,
the crushed headlight, shards
still tucked under my hide,
the grill like a torn tin can,
and you careful
not to cut yourself while wiping
my smear of blood
off the black bent hood.

Why you didn't stop when I leapt
into the spotlight? Did I blind
you with my radiant grace?
What will you do with me now?
Don't leave me still breathing,
as my blood ekes out over
the white lines. Don't leave
as the breath leaves.
Don't let me die alone and rot
or let me smell my flesh as it turns
to dirt, as the maggots wriggle
through holes and the flies
buzz like miniature vultures.
Don't leave my eyes open
to watch as everyone passes.

Horseshoes and Horns

We are heading to the space
in the horseshoe cloud
riding the leather of our
seats. Hold on tight
as we pass the model T.
Like a troublesome lawnmower
its stalled at the curb, and
the white haired man is
cranking, cranking on the crank,
twisting, turning, winding
up his car, until it growls
angrily in protest. Better
a horse that plods sedately
never talking back.
The stallion may neigh,
flick his tail and shake
his head at your inept
handling, but feed him well
he'll carry you faithfully
between cars honking
as they stop and go.

Coming Home From School

The window's halfway down
and wind wooshes in the car.
I'm lying on the backseat,
all six years of me barely
spanning the length of leather.

There is power in air that
whirls in and out and above.
I am almost afraid to touch it
one hand above my head,
finger poised above the lowered glass.

I thrust finger and knuckle into
the torrent of force that screams
invisible beyond the car. Tugging at
my hand, I give the rest to the
hungry begging of the current,
palm up to the sun, surrounded
in a gale that my face cannot feel.

Then terror, for power is real,
I think of my hand chopped off
by a passing car, falling
through the window from safety,
or the window clamping on my hand,
a glassy trap of mother's bidding.

I snatch it back, the skin cool on
skin. The fires of fear in my stomach
burning the inner coils as if dropped
into acid. And I watch, the window
does not move, the whistling tide of
remains unchanged above me, taunting.

I reach up, testing the waters
once more, one finger at a time,
curling into the open,
swimming against the sky,
and I'm scared once more.
But I hold my hand in place,
splayed in coursing air,
grabbing at the perfect blue,
daring the wind to take me.

We'll Split the Driving

We planned for the summer,
four weeks on the road,
across the country,
the two of us,
and the world's largest ball of twine.

We would drive together,
travel at the same speed,
listen to the music
in our own world, crashing past everyone else.

When you got sick, and the surgery failed,
I wasn't there.
You slipped unconscious before I arrived,
and I was left talking to your sleeping form,
watching you twitch,
watching you fight,
watching you travel somewhere without me.

Somehow, you came out alive,
and I was thankful there was time left for us
to spend.

The next summer we planned again
for the future, for a future summer
when there was still yet another summer ahead,
and another chance to travel together.