

## Until Death Do Us Part

*Pieces of your heart are like feces art*  
she says smacking gum, blowing bubbles.  
My wife of some long time ill beyond pains,  
temperatures, microbial intrusions.  
I am swamped by her wanton ideas.  
*Surely you must realize there is something wrong*  
she declares, standing on her head. *With you.*  
She is on the treadmill, on Facebook, backstage  
at The View, on a plane to Sweden, asleep on pillows.  
*Did you notice all the crickets have disappeared?*  
Up high on the roof, in the yard trimming hedges.  
She is everywhere at once spread so thin  
placing tired fingers gently in her mouth.  
*Only the biological parent can scream.*  
I have seen everything she has and once  
it was sweet and tender and fresh in real time.  
Now, we row together a small, shallow vessel.  
*Do you think a barn owl could live in salt water?*  
She is rowing, swimming, napping, talking to fish.  
Hedges, Spanish moss gather intelligence.  
She is a gator, a gnat, a coyote, coded whisper.

Uber Notes: Panhandler

A purposeful gait carried his stank right to my car window  
*Care to donate to our church community outreach center?*  
I swallowed the last bite of my dollar burger, sipped water.  
*Didn't I donate the other day? Weren't you at Save-A-Lot?*  
He pursed fat lips, scrunched his neck, shook his head *No!*  
*We're a different church, a really goot church,* he assured.  
The icy wind humped swell, I took it from his ashy hand:  
Solid Rock Temple morning service bulletin dated three  
weeks earlier so I looked up, cold stinging my tired eyes.  
He sucked snot, coughed, white snow carrying filth away.  
I handed over a much-loved \$5 bill, his eyebrows arching.  
*The Lord helps those who help themselves,* I told myself.

## Taxi Whore

I picked her up on East Perry, knew she was easy right off as she limped aboard the big van with the little school bus door ducking in from a cold drooling rain I asked *So you lost a shoe?* She said *No, I found one* then offered a blow job for a ride to The Wharf a little shack with an old juke box and tilted floor and a most-perfect slate pool table and *Though I'm not impartial to fellatio* I said *I'd really like eight dollars* and she barked *I'm not paying you eight dollars to suck your dick* the bellow of her righteous whiskey voice stoked the fire in me whispering *Punch her out, punch her out* though I didn't and at dawn I parked the taxi crawled to bed sore and arthritic, wept longingly for everyone I ever knew but not for her or I, clenched two fists tightly beneath the covers and let the world seize all it ever wanted, begging the simplest of mercies, and no more free rides.

## Office Visit

Doc taps my back & knees & chest  
grabs my nuts with too much glee  
peers into my mouth & nose & ears  
says *I looked at your questionnaire.*  
*Why do you drink so much? Do you*  
*have to drink to get through the day?*  
I say: *No, I want to, just because*  
& I look at my watch: 7:45 a.m.  
I cough violently, hack up a bloody one.  
*Listen, you gotta' get a move on it here*  
*Doc Pakistan or Taliban or whatever*  
*you are. Feltner's is opening soon*  
*& there's a stool with my name on it.*  
*They'll be waiting. I got commitments.*

## Uber Notes: Indigo Suede Platforms

Her cross three a.m. words veer quickly  
from sentence/clause/gibberish  
then back and when he climbs out he says  
*Take her wherever she's going*  
she leans out the window sloppy  
*Thanks a lot you asshole*  
stepping on syllables with a fat, crazy  
tongue attached to a small, spinning brain.  
She'd have been pretty enough if she'd  
cloak that killer body, face in silence.  
*He says I tried to throw him off a balcony.*  
She leans against the door, hikes her feet  
to show me platforms she loves.  
*Oops, I don't have any panties on, she giggles.*  
*Somebody idiot said I tried to stab him.*  
Approaching destination she requests stealth  
mode -- no lights, cut engine, coast silent-like.  
*Roomie says I stay out late and drink too much*  
she explains in thick accents of Jaeger, Corona.  
She emerges, traipses incongruous upending  
on a frost-caked lawn before my headlights and  
she did not lie: She was without undergarment  
--and they really were a nice pair of shoes.  
Indigo suede with black-and-gray woven  
tongues, full stacked leather soles with  
silver buckles that catch all the best light.  
I prefer silver to gold any day of the week.