

“831derful”

You used to do this to me:

Call him for backseat trysts

Not far from where I lived

While I slept soundly,

Thinking your goodnight meant you'd be doing the same.

You married him

But kept me circling.

Caught in the gravity of your curves

I could not resist a call to come

Crashing onto your surface,

Concerned but listless that the symbol

Of your eternal unity

Sometimes scratched my dick.

Two car seats in the back now.

Our lust constrained

To fewer cubic feet,

I cannot share with you this stillness,

So I leave you shirtless,

No longer orbiting you.

“Belinda”

Belinda.

Buh Lin Duh.

I’ve known one.

She looked like what I imagine

Emily Dickinson’s mother looked like:

Pale with short, dark hair.

Thin and tired.

Her husband of many years

Left her for his high school sweetheart.

He was tall with a pot belly and a southern drawl,

Like a congressman.

He put mayonnaise on his corn on the cob.

He cut his own lawn, despite having the money—

He was a banking executive—

To pay someone to do it, because

“It was his only exercise.”

It was a riding mower.

He came back to Belinda

And she took him.

They adopted a boy from Vietnam

Soon after,

Who they both then ignored

By filling his hands always

With screens.

They and the boy retired to North Carolina

Where they lived in a neighborhood

With a man-made lake

And a pool.

He bought a golf cart to get to the pool

And a boat to cruise the lake.

Presumably, Belinda has driven both.

But I have trouble believing it.

“Monopoly”

I'm in shorts and a t-shirt,
Basketball in hand,
Sticky from summer heat,
When my grandfather arrives
In his blue Buick.

He's holding a Monopoly board
From McDonalds as he greets me.
It's colorful, covered in creases,
Dotted with stickers he's pulled
From sodas and burgers and fries
As he drove east.

He explains the game,
Tells me he might win a tv soon,
He just needs New York Avenue.
He's got Park Place,
If he gets Boardwalk
He'll win a million.

He's never spoken
In paragraphs to me.

He's excited about a game.

This quiet man, talking;

This serious man, playing—

Some part of me makes sense

Of it all in a flash

Before I am aware of any confusion.

A deep sadness crushes my young chest,

Moves out from my center

Into my limbs as I confront

A new knowledge:

Despair can surface as exuberance;

As I feel a portion of his mourning:

This is his first trip without her.