

Feeding the Dog

What I like is food, exercise, but mostly food—
chewing on sunglasses, puking up the entrails
of deer, twisted mats of grass, and laying
in patches of poison oak, but mostly food—

knocking mice from banks, shredding
the salty cuffs of running shoes. I'm not mad.

I like food. The clang of dog food dropping
into metal dish—pieces of your life and mine,
patches of sunlight, rolling in beaver crap, chasing cats
into strange garages—but mostly food—

Yeah, I'm driven crazy by food. I can smell it just beneath
the surface of your skin; seeds, buds, bubbles trapped
in the ice of a frozen lake, what you ate for dinner,
what you ate for yesterday's dinner, that thing that

will finally touch air come spring—

Kirk Finally Takes me Hunting

Mist in a field. Deer in a field.
The ring of a cell phone cuts through the scent of me,
the eye boogers of me.
Frozen meat hunks for hands,
I dig into my felt-lined jeans
like a dog trying to eat a chocolate cake
off a high counter. When I look up
all that's left is the mist and the phone and Kirk,
staring at me
beneath his fluorescent orange hat.

Transmission

At five o' clock in Julesburg, CO,
a waitress holds us suspended
over chicken fried steak, fried chicken,
and chicken fried chicken

as we listen to the endless serenade
of that thing on the wall;
the thing I say is a piece of crap,
the thing Adam points to
and calls the air conditioner.

Outside, the clouds ride in,
grey and green, and a slat of yellow sun
winks out. Across the road
The Twisted Turtle Liquor Store is empty,
but the drive through window is not.
Cars and trucks click through like a pacemaker.

“Pepper?” asks the waitress.

One of us nods.

Before I can stop her, the grinding of pepper
sounds like the grinding of the transmission,
but instead of pepper, the burn of synthetics,
and instead of the hum of the road,
the sign of the Budget Host
which every morning says the same thing,
“Cleaning fowl is prohibited in this hotel.”

Something in me has finally broken
and the rolling grass has broken open,
and Julesburg bleeds into us
while the mechanics bleed us dry.