

Fickle Weather: Poems

The Ford Escort

On rides from Massachusetts to Florida I sat behind my father
He needed the most leg room and I the least.
He would run his hand up my shin
Like a spider, between our seats.
“Just making sure you’re still there.”

He didn’t know I quietly imagined
A tiny tight rope walker on the power lines
I didn’t know he locked the doors when we went
Around sharp corners because he once fell out of one

Rolled down window at tolls
Air slightly warmer and I wanted
Him to leave it down but I didn’t ask for that
or to stop for a bathroom

Setting up a two-day home
In a few feet of red upholstered space
Is perhaps where I got my love of organization,
A compulsive imagination

Red lights ahead, white lights behind to illuminate my page,
hands raised. The view from the back seat:
As comforting as the people in the front seats
As familiar as the trapeze artist in my mind

The Dental Office

You age in all the places you go

You grew up at the dentist's, too
Now that you're grown you drive
on your own. You notice the toys
haven't changed in the waiting room

Disappointed. No children here
You don't get a prize this time
You deserve it more than ever
Novocain and Percocets are a kind of prize

Meditation

Unfinished laundry and adjacent worries
Coffee and tobacco will make your teeth yellow
And your skin wrinkled
You should call your father
You should find that thing you lost
Worrying like this is a waste of time
The To Do list never goes away
What would the Dalai Lama say?
Stress has been linked to heart problems
Try not to think about that, either

March

Antique heating grates chirp arrhythmically
ticking out another universe's time. Ping!
like plucked piano strings in an otherwise
inspiring quiet. Empty tables, patient chairs.
Church bells chime as no one exits the buildings.
Serotonin snickers in a drawer, behind tax forms
Brightness swells and wanes

Moving

Kids and cats love to play
in boxes

This corrugated world not much different
than shut eyelids, but composed
of a boundary more stable than flesh

Pack up your ideas. Redecorate
the ceiling of your cerebrum. Seal
your thoughts safely with clear tape

you can own this emptiness