

planting

He was ripe as summer fruit that's fallen on the ground
and flies have gotten at. The truck, already sweating in the
morning air, was full of feet and chew. The truck, she hummed
and belched. He spat a brown stream out the window, cranked
the jangly music as I hefted in. I dozed against the window
and his voice became a distant tail-light, fading into dusk,
the hour he took to drive to Conns Mill and the site:
"old girl slept on my shirt last night..."
It was a certain kind of silence—

Love's like dread
from the outside (that's why they call it *bumping uglies*):
you rub the ugly sticks together and they make a home.
You say *the devil beat his wife today* and she knows what
you mean: the secret valley of her knowing is your home.
Her sugar-rotted teeth are luminescent pearls.
You feel like you could piss behind the moon—

The clearing meant that we would soon be country
boys at work. The truck sighed, coughed, and spat
us out. "Excusez-moi," John said, and put his lunch
under a tree: soft apples, gently bruised.

Don't. Stop.

Don't say it if you mean it.
Don't be mad. Don't
take the last train to Clarksville,
which means don't be a hero or a taxi driver.
Don't ask, Are you looking at me? Do you
feel lucky? Punk? Don't sit alone
outside the darkened house,
your metal shavings and your butts and ash
drifting over the cracked vinyl,
like the first waft of snow under our door,
nothing to warm us but us. Don't sit alone,
your trunk all bonesaws, duct tape, lye.
Don't let me be misunderstood. Don't play
Stuck in the Middle
With You above the muffled screams

Don't cheat in our hometown.
I know you won't,
but seriously, don't. Don't take
your love to the suburban sprawl.
In other words, don't sneak onto the set
of *Tooth Fairy 4* ("this time, it's personal"),
and find yourself, alas,
in the private dressing room of Dwayne
the Rock Johnson, armed with a two pound bottle
of coconut oil, your body a glossy ticket stub
waiting to be autographed.
Don't, and I won't climb into my time machine,
emerging in 1972 in search of Gloria Hendry,
who introduced Roger Moore to Bond
and interracial love and bikinis and girls
with muscles. You're a girl with muscles.
Don't.