

*Mortician's Son*

Travis knew about dead bodies. He always said  
animals are better than people.

We drank vodka from a plastic handle on the bridge  
behind the Motorcycle Warehouse the night

he asked me if it was possible to love  
two women at the same time.

I remember the way he said 'web'  
the sound of grey creeping bad luck

somewhere in town  
quiet as a coke and wet with clay.

*Forty Foot Road*

Through hunger and no new breath we stay walking.

We look out while the neighbors break each other behind us

the trees right up against our wall

the wall right up against the trees.

Each breath sinks and moans beneath Travis's bridge and the whole

coast sings like a big black foghorn every night and the air

smells like pizza and we stay walking.

After the bridge, I have the feeling of being in a clothing store

where the clerks look at me like they know

I already stole something and they don't care.

*Terror in the Eyes of Geoff*

We wait behind Jake's  
for an older brother, a cool cousin,  
no one shows for a long time  
in the cold  
we smoke cigarettes.  
Travis says his favorite word  
is 'mother-of-pearl'  
I say *that's three words*.  
He says *yeah, but it's one thing*.

We see Geoff coming, talking  
to himself a little. He'll hook us up  
if we let him keep the change.  
He says he's getting drunk tonight  
because his car broke down.  
He's skittish, so I leave it to Travis.  
I hear him say *yeah, when it's this cold*  
*machines only say yes or no*  
as he puts the money  
in Geoff's hand.

We head for the bridge— three

of us now, Travis' backpack  
full of whiskey and pills,  
we walk fast to push  
the cold away from our bodies.  
We attract the cops, a cop.

In the freezing air, we hear  
the siren sputter and wheeze  
like a flock of dying gulls.  
Geoff turns and looks at us;  
terror in his eyes. He runs.  
We all run.

*From a Breeze*

Wherever the dead go is pretty smoke  
the kind of smoke that's propped on the sky like a fist of clay melting  
a dream that picks me up without my knowledge  
as someone leans on a P.A. at the street fair under the temporary lights,  
tarp-sewn, casting shadows; a giant dead bird made of good news.

*An Animal Eye*

In the dream of finding a knife on the sidewalk  
there are men all around me. They breathe and try  
like a horse running. I breathe and try like a horse running.  
A dirt-clod bloom of mortal flower panic in me ends  
as a moment ends, an empty sleeve,  
all the construction we never see,  
every fence we'll never climb,  
invisible as water to a fish.