

## **When We Try Small Talk**

That Sunday's argument stuck to my ribs like meatloaf and mash.  
I had felt like a cockroach under mom's shoe,  
trying to find any way to squeeze out of my fatal mistakes.  
But I was cornered and knew it, everything inside me froze and a  
scream bubbled.  
It was just like when I got caught naked under the blanket  
with a Barbie, and I exploded like a dynamite stick.  
Anything to distract from my suddenly very transparent self.  
But it had been time to give in.

I'd destroyed too much in that direction anyway. It's always good to switch tactics.

## **There's a Color for Everyone**

My throat felt sore but I didn't know from what. A good friend, Gigi, said she suspected my chakra was acting up. Wear blue, she said.  
In a sense, I also knew it wasn't something physical. More like something left unspoken.  
It made sense to me for a minute.

A few days passed, and the feeling was gone.  
I never did wear anything blue. Just not my color.

## **Nature Knows Best**

I was in the grocery store the other day and they had a few nice hats near the back, with the greeting cards. I ate a few grapes from my basket while I tried on a tan Trilby. Fit good.  
I kept it on as I went down the snack aisle and picked up some kettle-cooked jalapeno chips. I  
opened up the bag while I waited in the check-out and munched a few, thoughts on the upcoming change of weather. Everyone's saying snow this Wednesday. I didn't believe it. Cold fronts don't show up on the weekdays. They wait for the weekend.  
I loaded up a reusable bag while the cashier handed me a receipt as long as my legs.  
The bag was heavy, I lifted it from underneath as I headed out the door to the car. I reached into my pocket for the key and my hat almost got blown off with a sudden cold breeze.

## dear the south

all you ask for is fried chicken. buttermilk dredged and bone-in. there's a leg left, someone get it. if there's no fat it's not right, if there's no butter it's not food. tired of all the grease that comes with you, it leaks out onto everything. there's a stain on everyone's best shirt in the shape of that church in amarillo and it's not coming out. i tried using dawn and while cheez whiz is the guarantee i refuse. there's no use putting anything out to dry on the line, the air's as full of water as a well and it doesn't matter that day was a week's summer sweat. coulda filled up a lemonade cup. maybe not as sweetly. sell it for \$.25, i swear you'll get a lucky customer. there's a stand at the end of the block, behind the school, in the parking lot, nectar of the gods. no wait, that's sweet tea and only your mom's or grandmom's. say otherwise and she'll get out the gun. either of 'em. both, actually. practice on the empty Coke cans on the mailbox. it's always Coke, the fuck's a pop, can't come around here sayin shit like pop. unless you'd like one of those in the face. it's a good look, though, everyone'll tell ya. speakin' of which, looks like the ladies of the town took turns sitting in an electric chair, manes thrown into static, split ends straining. tell one of them that and see what you get. a slap full of red nails and not much else. not that there's much times to say when the kudzu's trying to get in through the window again, rapping with dark green fingers and heavy knuckles. there is it goes, crawling into the bedroom and around the posts shaking them and annoying the kids. chop it off, it grows faster and further but don't ask me how it got there from japan. don't ask anyone, where's japan.

there's pride in gas station bathrooms where it smells like the first bite of bubblegum.