



Fleeing into stillness

Crossing America, along interstates, smells change more than scenery
Wet worms, mixed earth, acrid chemical tinge, sewage, animal feed, skunk
Each small no-name pull-off, almost identical
With its chain of gas stations, fast food shops, lonely motels
I drive without stopping
Except for gas
From my east coast suburban home into the mountains of Colorado
Three shooting stars pass me before I get pulled over for driving 18 over
"I feel bad," says the cop
Handing me a ticket, my record
Of talking my way out of tickets
Blown.

In such a hurry
To find a touch of stillness
Perhaps to taste, if even for a moment,
What I am lacking
What is driving me to pull apart my life.

At one rest-stop
A man is asleep, his lights still on
I tap on his window
No response
Again
He shudders into disoriented awakeness, fear on his face
He almost drives off
"Your lights are on," I say loudly to his fogged window
His face relaxes as I walk away.

Music plays loudly, rolling in the car with me
My mind sings along to words I don't know
To words that don't register
They don't need to
They are simply occupying my mind
I call friends, others text me, my cell phone buzzes with words
I'm not yet ready to face the silence.

In the heart of America
I pass countless pro-life signs
So many that I long to get pregnant
Just to get an abortion
To rage against people
Who pay to put up signs
To make women feel guilt.



I drive all day
I drive most of the night
I drive
It's something I've always done well
Perhaps I could become a truck driver
And cross darkened states to loud music
Without having to figure out what is lacking
I could fill my life with long hours
Alone.

I discover that I can write in my journal
As I drive 80mph across sunny and dull Kansas
I try to keep this gift to a minimum.

Many miles out of preachy middle states
I turn off the music
Breathe in the silence
Roll down the window
As I pass fields of sunflowers at the base of the Rockies
I ask myself aloud
"What do you want?"
I pause
As if it wasn't me asking the question
"To end my safe life-style,"
I know what I want
I just need the strength to continue
So I make it happen.

I stop late morning for a rest
The August heat, even in the shade, slinks into me
Eating wine grapes in the reclined front seat
I don't need to get anywhere
I am simply here
I could stay at this rest stop
For days
For weeks
No one would know
I could simply vanish
I feel completely unattached to anyone in the world
All I have
Is me
I taste complete freedom
In each grape exploding in my mouth
I missed these small winery grapes
As a child, I ate them off the vine
At my grandfather's house
Before he turned them into wine.