Nights in early springtime I’d spend on wheels  
oftentimes ago  
traversing America by waning moonlight.  
Early in the year still, enough to season the earth with unsullied snow  
and the Midwest air icy with a taste of rust,  
you felt it coming in through your teeth  
pulsing down to the fingertips in a wild pioneer’s song.  
Unknown (I in bluejeans  
and all my years beheld by one warm coast or another)  
but not unfriendly.

It’s so long since I drove through  
the golden hour of those wide plains and mountains that never  
crawl any closer no matter how far the road pulls you.  
Dawn to dawn  
all folded into improper old white van  
dragging in the powder despite its chained tires but  
we aim with what bow we have.  
On our way to nobody knows what.  
No one watching that humble ship go by but  
chilly weeds and earth and the occasional cow  
by the side of some unremembered Midwest highway.  
I all remember.  
Every stone and hole in the trail leading us North  
not to discover but to forget, not to hunt but to flee.

Dreams I had in the front seat there in canyons  
of formulaic tumbleweed danger  
and winds lashing at every turn and once or twice hailstorms,  
their blue angry torrents.  
We needn’t maps, nights we’ll sleep in Zion  
with the ruins of civilization to protect us.  
This is my Tintern Abbey,  
each year the trees grow wilder and God shrinks into their shadows  
and wolves of America cry for their dead.  
In this thick darkness nightmares can bloom unwelcome and invade  
as frost, lingering until fair dawnlight emerges to kiss the peaks awake.

We found new truths inadvertently in the new snow.  
Buried waiting for an unsuspecting hand maybe.  
There lay conch shells and bullet shells by some karmic  
and severe displacement which pervades that country  
nearly unnoticed alongside the garbage of man,  
stepped over commonly and rescued finally by  
we the innocents we the nonbelievers.  
With fire I would chase away those nighttime visions  
and return my hands to their past dexterity.  
Someone speaks feverishly, the white solitude is endless.  
Weary cow eyes evade us in the fields and not a house in sight  
but home is the road and the nowhere it leads to.