

## In College I Wanted to Visit You

*Sam Rice*

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so my mother taught me how  
to drive long distances on back country roads. I take  
my time. Gardens and churches are swallowed  
by I-670 into wheat fields and rotten barns as I twist  
through little towns with names like Margot  
and Homer, as if they might know each other. If it's night  
I am to keep my brights on so that every yield  
and stop sign lights up like televisions  
behind windows as I walk my dog at night.  
This way I spot any stray deer or barn cat  
that crosses the road; this way every warning  
or pothole glows as if meant to be found.

But I knew you might grow tired  
of waiting—what my mother did not warn me of  
were the hills that stretch along the outskirts of towns,  
the ones that settlers and Natives camped  
on when they didn't want to drown in the open rain.  
She did not tell me how quickly there could be nothing  
and then a harsh flash of white light climbing  
the hillcrest as cars drive past. She did not tell  
me that in a space of road as bright as noon  
I might swear it was you in the driver's seat,  
the weight of a decision on your pale brow.