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Patchwork

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Patchwork

In my attic, under a box of red mirrored
Christmas ornaments, I find a quilt made
By a woman I once knew. I drag it, ragged,
Torn, behind me down worn hardwood steps.
My cigarette's glow spreads into the darkness,

The quilt is warm. Warm as the pies
That woman pulled from the oven
On Sundays—Pecan, peach, cherry—
All stamped with the feet of those porcelin
Crows sitting on the windowsill above the sink.

"Cataracts," my mother once said, "she has
Cataracts." She also had cats. Lots
Of them. More kinds than the 5 & 10
Had candies. Tigers, Siamese, Persians,
They dug huge holes in the front lawn.

Her husband once bought a new Buick
From Dick Wilson Motors. It had four doors,
Chrome all around. He left the window open
And a tiger clawed the stuffing out of the bucket
Seat. Red-faced, bubbling with sweat, he sped that car

So fast down Highway 33, himself fueled by Jim Beam,
That he missed a left hand curve and sailed
Into a crabapple tree. Leaving her
With a legion of feelings and a trunkful
Of clothes to quilt into blankets.

Mark Livengood