

## Homeless

For weeks I've seen him sitting on  
that crate. He's asked me for a smoke,  
I've given him one. He's famous here  
and drinking whiskey in the cold.

This time he asks me to watch his change  
cup. I watch his change cup. He comes  
back carrying a 7 Eleven rose wrapped  
in cellophane. Hands it to me.

I want to know him. It's the tan in the middle  
of winter he has. Tan from the sometime-sun.  
His eyes are hanging raindrops, I can see  
by their color, blue appetite. He asks me

if I want to see where he stays. I do.  
And so we walk the block behind  
the closed-down movie theatre  
to where he's made a kind of tent.

He holds the shower curtain  
that is the door open for me  
to go in. I know I shouldn't.  
I go in. There are piled up

blankets against the theater's wall.  
I sit in the classroom chair in the tarp  
he calls his teepee. His floor is the sidewalk  
on which he burns the wax bottom

of a candle so it can stand.  
He asks to kiss me. I let him  
kiss me. He says I could  
use the Starbucks bathroom

around the corner. It's February-  
cold out. I mean, it's winter.

## Sunfall Triolet

The tree undressed when she approached.  
Down the long path, the birds gathered  
before the fires of autumn encroached  
and undressed the tree. When she approached,  
the branch lay bare. Having lost the broach  
of green chatter and bathed in silver and azure,  
the tree undressed. When she approached,  
down the long path, the birds gathered.



## The Campfire

We went into the woods to build fires,  
the way our fathers had shown us,  
gathering twigs to burn like  
small effigies we built of ourselves.

The way our fathers had shown us,  
we gathered the slack and the day jobs.  
To build effigies out of ourselves, we took  
dance classes on Tuesday evenings.

We fell slack into the shitty work  
and forgot to tell our wives about  
dance class on Tuesday evening  
(on purpose or out of despair).

We forgot to tell our wives about  
the sharp pains we felt that afternoon.  
On purpose or out of despair,  
we packed the hatchback and drove off.

The sharp pains we felt that afternoon  
did little to slow us on our course,  
as we packed the hatchback and drove off  
for the seclusion of gravel roads.

Though it did little to slow us on our course,  
we thought about it as we passed  
from pavement to gravel oblivion,  
the slack and the agony of day jobs.

We thought about it as we passed,  
gathering twigs to burn like  
the slack and the agony of day jobs.  
We went into the woods to build fires.

## Catfish Creek, Texas

We—there is no we—stumble off swamped trails,  
concocting tall tales of how the other fell.  
But no one falls.

Instead, Spring,  
a memory to relive. Dogwood blooms  
white as dandruff—nothing until you've  
seen the same nude tree opening itself  
into shyness where rain huddles in want.

Above, stars gather their patterns, a little  
dimmer, maybe, not that you could tell:  
the Milky Way circles the swamp night's finger.  
A wedding band. Alligators stir to the din  
of shirtless boys croaking their names,  
looking for a fight. Somehow, no one falls.  
Our fists are flowers that we can't open.