

Virgo

Passenger seat. Upstate New York. The first trip in years to see dad.
Endless hills and twisted roads, sparse communities sprinkled with dead leaves.
He drives.

Dad tells me of these mini-communities.
“Hasidic Jews,” he labeled them, “Buying out these once great small towns,
these areas.”
(Wrecking the place, essentially.)

Up the road, two figures appear like images from an indie movie. A pair of men
with brimmed black hats and exaggerated curly sideburns, grooming their shaggy
beards with a firm hand. Holding a few white plastic bags with red ‘Thank You’
repeatedly stamped on the side, they shuffle down the road’s dusty shoulder.
I ponder who they might be. What lives they must live.

The vehicle I’m in swerves as Dad’s rage blasts into my ear over the 80s station
that was already roaring guitar riffs.
A hostile car horn blares as he lifts a hairy middle finger.

William Lewandowski’s debut book of poetry, *Sometimes the Stars Say*, paints the sometimes
beautiful and sometimes gruesome parts of life. This book of poems highlights the struggles of
mental health and toxic relationships, as well as the strength of overcoming the hardest parts of
life. After I read the rest of “Virgo,” I will share another poem of mine called, “Aries,” which
examines the theme of ambient loss—when you’ve lost someone or something although they
haven’t physically left.

I can’t recall what he shouted as I slumped into the car seat,
attempting to disassociate from the fresh racism emanating like a hot lump of
dog shit from this driver I’m situated next to.

Becoming as invisible as I can, I fail to hide as my eyes—terrified, innocent, and
sincerely apologetic—meet up with the older of the two men.
His eyes sympathized, “Child, I’ve heard it all before.”

Aries

Can you hear the bliss buzzing off the beaming store lights?
Ever look at the cracks in the cement?

Can you feel the presence of the pedestrians;
you know, the ones that can tell you
about every nook and niche in town?
Do you absorb the life surrounding you?

Can you feel yourself fading?
A connection to that leaf this tree discarded?
Or any bond with me?
Much less, this vibrant universe surrounding you?

Are you aware of my spirit, ambiance slipping away
from your focus, your attention?

Feel my heart stiffen and stop
when your name comes up?

Do you sense the abandonment
that my anger has begun to brew?

Can you grasp loneliness
starting to nudge up around you?

Do you feel that breeze? Chillier than yesterday,
if you hadn't noticed. ~~You had to have.~~

That windchime seems to be playing more of a
minor key lately. ~~Not that you bothered listening.~~

Don't you get that sensation of a dying Autumn
wrapping closer, almost like a too-tight turtleneck
starting to asphyxiate?

You sure you don't realize you've lost something?

