



Arbor Vitae

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Blank Pages

staring at them without regard for human life
 thinking about bus stops and cheerleaders
 watching trucks fall through the ice
 and seeing neighbors poison the water supply
 dirty sand and cocktails run through pages
 where the final place to rest is somewhere inside the pulp
 of vacant desires represented by soft diamonds
 on the hand of an auto insurance representative
 fighting partisan bullshit that split fathers and sons
 from points of reason to something far away
 wondering what to tell the widow whose only sin
 was turning a deaf ear to infidelity
 lunging for the grand scheme only to fall
 to the canvas in a fist fight with air
 sap still pulsing through this magic flat board
 looking for inspiration I doodle a cat.

—Joshua Beam



Still Life With Indifference

The full moon above a browning cornfield
 The Lincoln Towncar driving 48 miles per hour
 down a county highway
 The farmhouse silo
 frozen against a Midwestern October landscape

When's the last time
 you thought about a mayfly?

Ferris Wheel Memories

moonlight shines through
 the patch of sky
 where once our bodies glided
 so easily

so easily
 does the breeze
 forget the shape
 of our skin

—Charles Nevsimal

Model Trains

me just out of diapers
 dad sets up vintage lionel freight train
 complete with power couplers and dump car
 around shedding Christmas tree
 behind flowered comfy couch
 under beveled glass table
 I peed on the floor
 I was so excited to see it run.

older I set it up
 rubberbanding track together
 maximum performance desired
 various lionel engineered freight
 leaning desperately around corners—
 reckless was my name—
 laying down smoke-oil on the track
 spinning locomotive wheel obsessions—

older, grandfather passes away at 65
 wills me his trains and his engineer's hat,
 a blue and white striped beret that squeezes
 tears for him from me when I see it,
 dad and I spend a long soulful day
 marking my trains to keep them separate—

older, dad and mom build a new house,
 a space in the finished basement delineated
 on architect's plans,
 labeled on the blueprint in painful neat architect's writing:
 "Train Room"—

a man now, my trains sit
 in faded weak cardboard boxes, color of parchment,
 in various basements,
 and my Christmas tree rots
 in storage, wrapped in saran-wrap.

—Rob Eckert

