

287 NORTHBOUND, SUMMER

On the back of your yellow motorbike
I sweat in my jacket and weigh each moment,
dialed to the frequency of threat:
the driver who does not signal,
the chasm in the asphalt just wide enough
for one motorcycle tire. The bike dips
and I press my knees to your hips. I see myself
spread along the parkway, cars swerving,
the plumes of exhaust, burnt rubber,
torn leather and a sick brainy smell
reeling in my nostrils when my head hits hard.

On the back of your yellow motorbike
the bacon and toast in my stomach is precious
since breakfast. I examine your neck,
the fine band of skin below your helmet,
it, too, is precious.
We pass cars and trees and highway signs.
My boots vibrate on the pegs and fear
sharpens everything. The sky accordions open,
a fold-out backdrop in an old cartoon
where everyone sings, us, the engine,
even the flowers and bugs.