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The Endless State

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The Endless State

Abstract

After the third accident, not his fault,
Amtrack desked my Uncle Dave for good. At family
gatherings he leaned against the wall like a tree
planted too close to the house. He buckled
the sidewalks with his feet, downed power lines
with his tight smile, and bourbons.

Keywords

Poetry, travel, Indiana, Chicago, Detroit



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The Endless State

by Brent Fisk

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gatherings he leaned against the wall like a tree
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the sidewalks with his feet, downed power lines
with his tight smile, and bourbons.

When I was young he had a quarter
for every coarse word, another when we cracked
his back with our socked feet.

I remember waiting up late as he drove the snowy interstate
from Dearborne to Newburgh, his face at the window
high on the door, a soft knock, a wisp
of hair floating above his woolen cap, saying,
Indiana is a goddamned endless state.

He loved his drinks over ice, the sprawl of us
wrapped around his neck or leg, peppered by our southern drawl,
Are there bears in Chicago, lions in Detroit? Do Polacks really run the streets?

He told us of drunks stripping naked in cars,
deer ghosting the fringe of the train's strong light.

The house sagged when his haversack leaned
near the door. He'd find a less direct route home, run
parallel to the old freight ways. I think of him whenever I see
a lone goose fallen from the flock's steady vee.

The call of the others pulling him along
on a wake of blue air and fading light.

Brent Fisk is a writer from Bowling Green, Kentucky who has had work in recent issues of *Prairie Schooner*, *Boxcar Poetry Review* and *Rattle*.

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