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Keep Returning

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Abstract

Was it the draw of pavement so expansive
that returns me to that off ramp
somewhere between Illinois and Nebraska
that night we stopped for gas?

Keywords

driving, cars, pranks, kilts, poetry



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Keep Returning

by Greg Nicholl

Was it the draw of pavement so expansive
that returns me to that off ramp
somewhere between Illinois and Nebraska
that night we stopped for gas?
3:00 a.m. and I walk to the edge
of the parking lot to smoke
and study a beetle as it struggles
against the curb. You stretch, begin filling the tank,
and we both turn when the car pulls up.
Moths throw themselves against the lights overhead
as four boys reeking of whiskey and Red Bull
rush inside, each wearing a kilt.
I need to sleep. It is my turn to drive.
I lift the beetle over the curb
and it walks slowly into the dry weeds.
Even the boys are leaving
laughing now because they raised their pleats
to the attendant to prove they were men.
It doesn't matter what brought us here,
to this road that continues long past the curve

and this dark field of wheat.
And the radio calms into silence.
And the cars move down the highway.
And it is quiet again.

Greg Nicholl lives in Baltimore and is an assistant editor at the Johns Hopkins University Press. His poetry has appeared in Arts & Letters, Barrow Street, Crab Creek Review, Harpur Palate, Natural Bridge, and elsewhere.

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