

Todd Robinson

An Agnostic Maps God's Country

Stirring bourbon and corn syrup in the cracked ancestral cup,
you ponder a night's drive west, where cattle cough at the edge
of purgatory as the last antenna whips past rotten homesteads,
crackling cowboy songs melting farm girls toward all sorts
of trouble. The Lord, they call Him who stacks nimbus clouds
over coyote dens and haymows, jealous even as He teases green
shoots from rows. Sunlight through windmill blades are facets
of His face, but death still stands every cowlick down at last,
"He leadeth me to still waters" another nocturne to bounce
off the cloud-rack. Chemistry has truer aim, but plonks perhaps
against the backbone of a lower power. Remember that as you
climb the celestial ladder Godward while stars fall further away
and daily coffee cools iron-dark while constellations wink out
and the voice that welcomed you here stammers goodbye.

Todd Robinson

Haibun Against Further Decline

*you will grow back, slow like grass, green
fuses around the wooden house. —Amelia Salisbury*

Spring here again at the windows, buzzing our leery hideaway. Yet you eschew pollen, streetscapes, sleep, meaning, daily dream a bull snake's flex around your neck, sleepwalk the plot hacked into the past by a blue eyed father who dug a plot, planted you in a prairie dress, watered himself with vodka cordials and cracked windshield glass. To hold some egg of hope whole in your oceanic chambers, preen mirrorless, diagnose birdsong through convalescent afternoons we learned to sow sober before your years burned with night sweats. Lover, your sea-green veins might yet run clean. For our lavish loss of petals, chokecherry

tree's bitter fruit, thank

forgetting that swallows each

vial, bulb, and feather.