

TODD ROBINSON

Aubade

Nebraska City, a summer like any other, hawks flexing over the river where I walked to graze or pray through my sleepless residency, two weeks of burr oaks and busted dirt. A year sober, I kept my door unlocked, hoping someone would blow in. I played endless solitaire, napped and rattled through afternoons while baseball diamonds wavered with August. Poems stayed mostly away. My roommate was no flirt, but poppies burst under her little feet when we circled the high school track. Most of all, she was from Pine Island, Minnesota. Her paintings smelled like wheat. William Duffy's hammock swayed in that lilt. The thing you want to happen never happens. We cooked together, brushed dust from our pasts, ached toward an ending. My wife knows none of this. That last day, I found my face before her floating thrift store dresses, pomegranate pink, touching what could not be touched.