

Some Roads in Iowa

He lived down the street, on a dead end
known as Boulevard. A quiet boy I grew up
drawn to, he grew lean, curving hard
and away like a good pitch
or trout.

We are never loving what we think we are. Never
simply. The first thing we loved
we don't even remember: a corner
of fabric, some handle. When we loved again,
perhaps a sound, we were actually trying to hear
fabric. We listened for corners.

What toy, looking back, taught me wrong? It said
to pull apart its hemispheres, let its insides
tumble out. It said to fill the hollowness again,
matching pieces to same-shaped holes. My
many-eyed pumpkin. My few-starred sky.

Good reasons, beyond this, loomed
for every shape, for North Fifth
turning onto a boulevard, for the chance
that we too would turn
into something else—ourselves—
or touch.

I was still a girl. I watched my left foot step
into what would be a shape, saw hips
then hands follow. I left sleep for concrete
outside his basement bedroom window,
sat at the screen for the sound of his breathing.

The hollow
more than shape is certain,
unfinished as some roads in Iowa
—or childhood, where the sounds started,
where we listened hard.