

## PREMISES

She drove a truck. It wasn't  
a question. Her shoulders  
were wide the way they had  
to be. The ball cap. The smile

like a sturgeon. In the morning,  
the white cab with the rummaged  
gray grill-work, hubcaps flayed  
away on some two-track gaunt  
and wily as a lover, ice  
on the windshield to say  
that nothing we make to see  
through stays clear long

or ever. To her, the rifle's  
chamber explicable, the gold  
thread that pulls a bullet true  
amid the red instant of an animal  
heart. She bagging Bud Light empties  
to return for deposit. She back  
of the class with Kodiak green

label, her Coke bottle filling  
a stickier brown. She Kmart  
security in a blue pointed vest, out  
in the parking lot brick-walling

the reedy punk with Green  
Day's latest slunk in his boxers,  
some old grief thing brined  
in her chest. The kid's nose  
bloodied against packed snow

and ice: accidental. The cold  
and the rust smell, the plow-truck

grinding a berm against old  
highway 2. Oh, she'll haul  
him up by the stolen 99-cent  
stretch-gloved hand with cut-out  
fingers. She'll tighten the backs  
of her legs for balance; her boots  
with their road salt shorelines  
know how to hold. If you must,

remember. But don't go judging  
her lovely. Don't go hanging  
the winter sun above rows  
of bombed-out Chevys, don't  
catch her reflection bending  
gold in the sliding doors clattery  
and fine as a river fit for melting,  
behind them everything new.