

## Five Poems · *Robert Wrigley*

### PARKING

Today I live where I have always been  
an adult, where I have always kept the same  
job, known the same friends, driven  
the same streets. What is it  
that is not in me now, that has not been  
in me for many years, that rigid  
sense of direction that led me  
always to where they were parked,  
the coupled cars, bumper to bumper  
or side by side, windows glazed,  
sweat-ridden, sodden with fumbling  
and passion.

Where are they?

Here, in the empty West, are they lost  
so easily, so easily vanished into forests,  
arroyos, the blind rutted ranch roads  
to nowhere? Or were we—miners'  
children, blessed in beer and whiskey, salted  
early by the salty tongues of grandmothers—  
allowed a wilderness our earth  
could no longer afford? The times,  
have they just got used to it all,  
the motel lots each Saturday night filling  
with jalopies.

I would not trade  
the familiar bedroom, the creak of spring,  
ease of middle age. But  
somewhere I want to believe  
the cars still rumble into place,  
those hot rods, the lucky ramblers  
in the station wagons of their fathers.

I want to believe the teeth still chatter,  
from winter cold or summer passion.  
I want to believe in an ardor as keen  
as the homing pigeon's, who reconnoiters, banks,  
lands, and coos like a fool in the dark.

### FIXING THE WINDOW

It is the way some vandal left it,  
like a spider's web askew—  
a spin of shards, the spaces themselves  
all hunks within the piecemeal shatter.

I tape the lines of it, follow them  
as though they were the window's silver bones,  
edgy in the sunlight. Then  
I cover all the pane,  
cellophane row on row, horizontal,  
vertical—inside and out.

Serviceable window, light shedder  
of slanted rectangles, kerosene rainbows,  
and out of which I watch the school children  
at play, rough-housing, tumbling,  
half unclear through the distances  
between us, the wishful scrim of repair.

### THE CHORE

The night we arrived home from our trip, father knew  
something was wrong in the root cellar.  
It was September, very late, tomorrow would do

for us to see, but I saw his light later  
on move quick across the yard,  
down the low near slope, and disappear.