

## Three for Mike Cummings · *Joseph Duemer*

### 1. *Desire*

When Spring came we thawed my car, pulled  
nests from the wheel wells and engine  
cavity. Then, we took long drives at night  
past fields patched with old snow.

Drunk, we crept through towns  
so small we didn't see them  
until the next morning.  
These were places we could only go

after the bars closed, trespassing,  
disturbing the sows.  
I still don't know what we were doing there.  
Trying to love everything, I guess,

with equal prurience.

### 2. *Intellect*

In the back bedroom of the farmhouse  
near Morse, sometimes I could almost  
quit thinking, forget the barn leaning  
towards itself, its loft sagging

with tons of wet hay left over  
from the days when a small place  
could make a go of it. I could have stayed  
there forever; the barn was almost massive

enough to defeat thought.

### 3. *Beauty*

I say *thank you* to the bus driver  
and start home through this  
suburb of retired fishermen.  
I've lost your address.

Across the street, a drunk stumbles  
from the padded door of Rosy's Bar  
and stops traffic. Taking his time  
against the light, he makes the other side

then pauses to yank a rose  
from a bush in someone's yard  
and gets away with it. Surprised,  
he tries for two blocks to poke

the stem through his buttonhole.  
No needle ever was more difficult to thread  
than this, which will mend nothing.  
Defeated, he chucks it,

really guilty now.