

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.