

Worcester, Next Nine Exits · *David Graham*

My waitress wipes her hands
and grows older.
As I leave, I overhear
the musical kitchen,

where my food returns
to be consumed.
Out back, crates give off
several childhood odors.

There's a place off the exit loop
where kids collect like rain
in a rock hollow that was
blasted by mistake.

They know the different makes
of truck, they predict
which cars hit the guardrails
ten miles on.

Turnpike ahead shimmers with glass.
Intelligent people have collided
with stupid ones. Where I'm going
caved roofs still hold back the rain,

flattened cans ascend to be filled,
a cat who has been given away
just makes it across the road
to the old neighborhood.